

**AN ECOSYSTEMIC ASSESSMENT OF THE  
'CHILDREN OF DIVORCE INTERVENTION PROGRAM'  
FOR CHILDREN BETWEEN THE AGES OF EIGHT TO TWELVE YEARS.**

***Mandy Lloyd-Young***

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### ***Abstract***

This study has been an attempt to understand the progression of twenty-eight 'children of divorce' as they have participated in the Children of Divorce Intervention Program (CODIP) and through the fifteen-month follow-up period thereafter. There were 15 girls and 13 boys; their ages ranged from 7 to 13 years; they were in grades 2 to 7 at school; 20 children were of middle-class status, 8 children were from lower socio-economic backgrounds; 7 children had parents whose divorce was pending, the other 21 children had parents who had been divorced between 3 months and 11 years; and 26 of the 28 children were in the custody of their mothers.

Pedro-Carroll, Alpert-Gillis and Cowen (1992) indicated in their research that the personal functioning of the children participating in CODIP improved despite socio-economic diversity, length of time their parents had been separated, and despite the different numbers of stressors these children had encountered in their post-divorce adjustment process thus far. In line with these findings, Kurdek (1981) believed children's post-divorce adjustment should be understood in terms of their own unique ability to cope within their peculiar context of cultural, social, legal, economic, educational and familial systems. He defined these hierarchically embedded systems as the macrosystem, the exosystem, the microsystem and in terms of children's ontogenetic functioning. It is impossible for an experimental approach to control for this myriad of complex factors and processes impacting on children's post-divorce adjustment. The research design chosen was of a quasi-experimental nature and based on Kurdek's (1987) application of Brofenbrenner's (1979) exosystemic epistemology to the process of divorce. Results at macrosystemic and exosystemic levels were predominantly thematically analyzed.

At a macrosystemic level parents indicated that socio-cultural values in our present society accommodate divorce and different family structures but that the ideal is still the intact family and marital stability. Post-divorce disadvantages and advantages to personal well being and family functioning are discussed.

At an exosystemic level the major stresses children experienced were the ongoing changes during the time trajectory of the divorce process. These changes were

specifically stressful with regard to their new post-divorce family structures, but also related to changes in terms of friends, school and residence. Other child-reported sources of stress were ongoing parental conflict; inadequate contact with a non-custodial parent, financial difficulties parents were experiencing, and having to attend aftercare. Children most often turned to their peers, and not to their parents, teachers, or their extended family for support. The major exosystemic stresses parents experienced were decreased financial support, work overload especially for the custodial parent, and changed social relationships. Parents fundamentally sought the support of extended family and work colleagues.

Results at a microsystemic and ontogenetic level were predominantly quantitatively analyzed with the use of one-way and two-way repeated measures ANOVAs as the statistical tools of analysis. The most significant results at the microsystemic level was that family functioning improved during the *divorce/separation event* for mothers and during *program intervention* for fathers. Fathers experienced access to their children to be problematic and not to improve over the eighteen months of the study. They experienced their co-parenting relationship with their estranged spouses to decline after program intervention. Children assessed their fathers' and mothers' parenting style in a more affirmative way than parents assessed their own parenting styles, except for the validating parenting style. The latter result confirms macrosystemic findings that parents are aware of appropriate post-divorce parenting styles that facilitate children's post-divorce adjustment.

At an ontogenetic level of functioning JEPI scores indicated that the majority of children participating in CODIP were not temperamentally difficult, and that their temperaments did not change during the eighteen months of the study. CRS results indicated children's peer social skills improved during the study. CPABS results indicated that children's fear of peer ridicule and avoidance decreased during program intervention and during the eighteen months of the study, as did their fear of parental abandonment and hope of parental reunification. Parent's PEF and RAS results of their children's ontogenetic functioning were conflicting. Mothers' PEF scores indicated that their children's behavioral adjustment had improved over the eighteen months of the study whereas fathers did not. Fathers' RAS scores however indicated that they perceived their children to be less maladjusted than mothers perceived the

same children to be. Teachers' T-CRS scores reflected a trend that was not significant that children who had participated in CODIP had lower problem and higher competency scores. GLEF scores reflected that from group leaders' perspectives this trend was statistically significant.

In conclusion it is apparent that children's ontogenetic functioning has improved during program intervention and during the eighteen months of the study that included program intervention and the follow-up period thereafter. Overall family functioning had improved significantly during the divorce/separation event for mothers, and during program intervention for fathers. Fathers experienced program intervention to be most supportive, but it did not seem to facilitate an improvement in the amount and quality of access they experienced with their children. Increased methodological rigor is required in terms of the inclusion of an appropriate control group if it is to become clear whether changes that occur over the eighteen month time period of the study were due to natural improvement occurring over the time trajectory of the divorce process, or whether a process initiated during program intervention was consolidated in the time period thereafter.

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## Chapter One

### 1.1. Why Study the Adjustment of 'Children of Divorce'?

Divorce has become an ever-increasing social dilemma affecting the lives of all family members involved. Children are often the most vulnerable in these situations because of their dependency, they have to rely on their parents to make decisions pertaining to their lives. Children need to adjust not only to the divorce event itself, but also to the initial parental separation before this event, and to the many changes throughout the divorce process that follow. According to Wallerstein (1989), these multiple adjustments may take up much of a child's life. Grych and Fincham (1992) add that these adjustments are re-visited at each nodal stage of the child's psychosocial development.

One child described the experience of her parent's divorce in the following way:

*"Life was perfect before everything happened. I remember in my kindergarten when I'd come home early and my dad would come home from work and eat lunch with me and my mom. Before everything happened I didn't have to pack a bag to see my dad. Life was great. Everything was too perfect. I sure do wish it was like that now.*

*The hardest part was going to school and having to tell people about it. And it was odd not to have a dad here. Nobody else in my class had parents who are divorced. Every time I thought of it I couldn't believe it had happened.*

*What helped most was my psychologist, and what helped some was just not thinking about it."*

(Mandy - aged 8yrs, Sprague, 1992, p.83.)

David related the following experience of his parent's divorce:

*Divorce is when your mom and dad get separated and live in different places.*

*This happens when they stop loving each other. Divorce hurts. My stomach hurts because I kept my feelings inside. I thought I was going to burst.*

*I thought the divorce was my fault because I heard my parents arguing about me. It made me feel sad.*

*I felt like I was being pulled apart. I did not like switching my toys between Mom and Dad's houses. I felt angry that this was happening to me. But I knew if I*

*wanted to see my parents I would have to live in two different places. Sometimes I forgot my homework at one of the houses.*

*I thought I was the only one going through this. But later I found out that others went through divorce too. Mr. Hayes helped me the most, because he had a divorce group for kids. We learned how to talk about our feelings and that divorce is not our fault.*

*My brother helped too. I told him it was my fault and asked how I could stop the divorce. He told me it was not my fault and there was no way I could stop Mom and Dad from getting a divorce. It made me happy to learn it was not my fault. It is not so bad now. I get to live in two homes and have twice as many friends. I still get to do a lot of fun things with my parents. Mom will always be Mom. Dad will always be Dad. Mom and Dad are friends now, but I still feel sad sometimes that we will never be a whole family again.*

*I would like to tell other kids that it will be tough, but you will get through it. If your parents get divorced it is not your fault. Do not keep your feelings inside.*

*Go talk to the guidance counselor, Mom, Dad, brother, and sister."*

*(David, aged 9ys., Sprague, 1992, p.85-86).*

The words conveyed by Mandy and David indicated the need for appropriate therapeutic support for most, or at least some children, in order to deal with the stress of divorce that pervades their lives and lingers there for many years after the initial divorce event. In their 1992 metanalysis of previous research findings pertaining to children's post-divorce adjustment, Grych and Fincham described the Children of Divorce Intervention Program (CODIP) as the most substantially researched group program thus far, with positive program intervention outcomes for children adjusting to parental divorce. The program was developed in the United States of America by Dr. Joanne Pedro-Carroll and Emory Cowen (1985b). At the time of initiating this thesis (1992) it had been implemented in over 50 schools in the Rochester area of New York with 430 children. The program had been found to help children in their emotional adjustment to the social and family stressor of divorce. On this recommendation the researcher decided to not only implement the program, but also to assess which children benefited from the program; which parts of the program were most effective, and if necessary where aspects of the program could be improved. It was considered important to assess which variables extraneous to the program impeded children's adjustment outcomes; and which variables within the program

intervention supported children's adjustment experience. It was only possible to investigate the impact of these variables by using a research design that incorporated an ecosystemic perspective.

This study is divided into the following chapters. To follow in the rest of this chapter is a literature review that substantiates why it is important to understand divorce as an increasingly prevalent social phenomenon, and how it affects children's adjustment. Chapter Two outlines a pilot study conducted before commencing with further research. In this chapter contents of CODIP are detailed, and initial issues pertaining to program implementation are addressed. In chapter Three the research methodology used is described: the choice of subjects; how the program was implemented; the research design chosen in the light of methodological shortcomings of previous research designs; and comparisons were made specifically to previous research conducted by Pedro-Carroll and her colleagues on the Children of Divorce Intervention program. In chapter Four the research results are detailed and discussed. Results were either quantitatively or thematically analyzed within the macrosystemic, exosystemic, microsystemic or ontogenetic context each specific questionnaire represented. In the final chapter, chapter Five, there is a discussion of the results and their implication for future program intervention.

The literature review attempts to provide an understanding of the divorce process, its prevalence in the South African society, and its impact on children's development. The literature review also considers why the Children of Divorce Intervention Program may be an appropriate source of intervention in supporting children in their middle childhood years to adjust to the prolonged life event of their parents' separation/divorce.

## **1.2. Literature Review**

The literature review addresses the prevalence of divorce in the South African society, and the impact this social phenomenon may have on children's development. Aspects of the divorce process are considered that facilitate or impede children's adjustment. It is acknowledged that children dealing with their parents' divorce/separation have to accomplish special psychosocial tasks over and above their normal age-appropriate developmental tasks (Wallerstein, 1983a). The accomplishment of these psychosocial tasks is considered in the light of the implementation of The Children of Divorce Intervention Program. The group benefits of this program are considered for children in their middle childhood stage of development and the question is asked whether it would be beneficial for this program to operate within the school setting as a necessary part of the school curriculum.

### **1.2.1. Divorce Statistics.**

Divorce statistics from the Department of Statistics, Cape Town in 1992 revealed that 21,006 'White' marriages, 5,408 'Coloured' marriages and 1,805 'Asian' marriages ended in divorce in 1992<sup>1</sup>. These statistics are interpreted, in terms of number of divorces per 1000 married couples in that year, to be 17,3% in the 'White' population; 11,7% in the 'Coloured' population, and 8.9% in the 'Asian' population. The number of minor children affected by their parent's divorce in 1992 was 24,291 'White' children, 9,052 'Coloured' children and 2,860 'Asian' children. The children most at risk for this social phenomenon appear to be 'White' middle-class children.

More recent 1995 statistics indicate that 16,788 'White' marriages, 5,029 'Coloured' marriages and 1,601 'Asian' marriages ended in divorce. These statistics are still interpreted in terms of number of divorces per 1000 married couples and found to be 13,5% in the 'White' population; 9.8% in the 'Coloured' population, and 7.4% in the 'Asian' population. The number of minor children affected by their parent's divorce in 1995 was 18,706 'White' children, 8,168 'Coloured' children and 2,389 'Asian'

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<sup>1</sup> The terms 'White', 'Coloured', 'Asian' and 'Black' were used to identify race groups during the South African 'apartheid' era. These terms are no longer relevant, but are still used by State statistical departments. They are included in this format to facilitate an understanding of the prevalence of divorce in the South African society, but are presented in quotation marks to indicate their irrelevance in the post-apartheid situation.

children. It has been difficult for statisticians to calculate divorce statistics for 'Black' South African groups because marriages in these groups have not been adequately recorded in the past. However in 1994 it was reported that 4,754 'Black' couples got divorced, and in 1995 this almost doubled to 8,174 known 'Black' marriages ending in divorce. In 1995, 6,352 'Black' minor children were affected by their parent's divorce; and in 1995 that number had increased to 10, 893. The general trend for divorce statistics between 1992 and 1995, as outlined by statisticians in terms of racial groupings, has changed. The divorce statistics for 'White' and 'Asian' populations have gradually declined – by 3.8% and 1.5% respectively. In the 'Coloured' population the incidence of divorce initially increased in 1993, then also began to decline gradually between 1993 and 1995 by 1.9%. The incidence of divorce was a newly reported phenomenon for the 'Black' population in 1994, and it had continued to increase in 1995.

The validity of these statistics depends on the following factors being considered:

- There are many incidences of people living together in committed relationships who separate but do not legally divorce. These incidences are tantamount to divorce but are not statistically recorded
- In some instances divorce statistics may be reflecting the dissolution of second marriages;
- The growing influence of westernized philosophies of life within South Africa may be impacting on different cultures who previously did not consider divorce to be an optional way of living.
- The decline in the number of statistically recorded divorces may be due to changes in economic status – legalized divorces have become too expensive. Either divorces/separations occur that are not legalized or statistically recorded, or people chose to remain in dysfunctional marriages for financial reasons, yet for all intensive purposes, live separate lives.
- There may be a return to values that enhance marital fidelity and the importance of the family remaining together.
- The growing impact of AIDS on the South African community may have changed the way in which people perceive committed relationships and marital fidelity.

According to statistics quoted by the Law Faculty of Witwatersrand University in 1992, South Africa has one of the highest divorce rates in the world at present, with three out of every five marriages ending in divorce (Taylor & Aronstom, 1992). Many children are being affected by this social phenomenon. In the United States it was predicted that one out of every two children born in our generation will have divorced parents and live in a single-parent home before they reach the age of 18 years (Pedro-Carroll & Cowen, 1985; Emery, 1988). Of these parents 80% of divorced mothers and 83% of divorced fathers remarry within three to five years after their divorce (Emery, 1988; Glick, 1984). Projections are that by 1990, 25% of children will be members of a stepfamily (Glick, 1984). These statistics indicate that not only do children have to adapt to the initial divorce event and the consequent changes in family structure, i.e. from a nuclear to a single-parent family structure with two separate parental nuclei, but within a few years they often have to adapt to either, or both, parents remarrying, which is another major adjustment to their family structure. To make life even more challenging, it has been found that 75 -80% of remarriages end in divorce as well (Bray, Berger, Silverblatt & Hollier, 1978). Sequential changes and reorganization in their family structures are constantly affecting the very foundation upon which children exist.

These statistics give some indication of the extent of this social phenomenon. Divorce impacts on all family members, and although it may be a creative solution to dysfunctional family relationships, offering the child and parents a respite from an excessively stressful family environment, it requires a major adjustment and life transition that:

*"...strikes at and disrupts close family relationships...leaving in its wake a diminished, more vulnerable family structure." Divorce "...traces a pattern of time that begins with an acute, time-limited crisis, and is followed by an extended period of disequilibrium which may last several years - or even longer - past the central event. And each introduces a chain of long-lasting changes that are not predictable at the outset and that reach into multiple domains of family life" (Wallerstein, 1983, p.230).*

Divorce may be one of the most critical and widespread mental health crises facing children today. This is happening in a country where there is a great paucity of

therapeutic intervention programs to help children meet this challenge. In addition, during this time parents are less available to offer their children appropriate support owing to the major psycho-social adjustments they too are needing to make (Taylor & Aronstam, 1992).

### 1.2.2. Impact of Divorce on Children's Adjustment.

Before discussing the impact of divorce on children's adjustment it is important to consider how divorce impacts on the adults who look after these children. When adults become stressed, maladjusted, or dysfunctional, this has a profound affect on the well being of the children in their care. Parents face the following typical divorce-related changes: a significant decline in income; the need to redefine roles and realign relationships; task-overload in home maintenance and child care; weakened support systems; working through distressing emotional reactions; and adaptation to a new family constellation. The consequent divorce-related changes for children are "...*family disorganization, erratic meal and bedtime schedules, lapses in consistency of limit-setting, and greater difficulties in child management*" (Pedro-Carroll et al., 1987, p.282). Several theorist found that children were at heightened risk due to the divorce process, and were found to be over-represented in clinic referrals (Kalter, 1977). They were also more prone to problems of aggression and under-controlled behavior (Emery, 1982; Felner, Stolberg & Cowen, 1975). Divorced adults were also found to be "...*consistently overrepresented in psychiatric hospital administrations, suicide, homicide and alcoholism rates; ...*" (Pedro-Carroll et al., 1987, p.282). (One may question whether the representation of divorced adults in the aforementioned rates was due to the divorce process, or whether these characteristics lead to the breakdown of the marriage in the first place.) Several theorists found divorced adults to be more strongly associated with impaired physical and emotional functioning than any other social phenomenon that impacts on adults' well being (Bloom, Asher & White, 1978; Wallerstein & Corbin, 1989; Zill, 1988).

Divorce may be a relief from a difficult family situation for some children, but they still experience much distress and pain, as well as many concurrent losses: "...*loss of a parent from the home; disruption of family network and support systems; changes in neighborhood, school and friends; and...a lifestyle that can no longer be maintained.*"



These changes, say Pedro-Carroll and Cowen result in “...*strong negative feelings, including fear, sadness, anger, depression and guilt*” (Pedro-Carroll et al., 1987, p.282).

Several studies have shown that these feelings and their behavioral derivatives persist long after the marital break-up (Hetherington, 1979; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1980; Wallerstein, Corbin & Lewis, 1988). Wallerstein, Corbin and Lewis (1988) reported in a 10-year follow-up study that some children of divorce were still experiencing painful memories many years after the initial divorce/separation event. Children resented losing an important part of their childhood and the benefits and protection of a stable, intact family. Although some children were proud of their independence and that they had survived the difficult family transition, many still felt significant distress and/or were lacking a sense of purpose. One third of the young women were invested in the ‘ideal’ of a lasting marriage but were weary of making commitments and feared repeating their parents’ mistakes. They were adamant they did not want to leave their children with the difficult life process of being a child of divorce.

Guibaldi, Cleminshaw, Perry and McLoughlin (1983) found in a nationwide survey of 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>-grade children that children of divorced parents as opposed to those in intact families experienced the following adjustment difficulties: they were absent from school more often, they did not achieve their academic potential, they were less popular with peers, and they had a more external locus of control. These difference remained even when socio-economic status and IQ were taken into account. A follow-up study by Guibaldi and Perry in 1985 showed that many of these early problems endured over time especially for children from families that experienced multiple changes and protracted stresses after the initial divorce event. Recently there has been contradictory evidence presented by Swedish researchers (Wadsby & Svedin, 1996) who paired 74 children of divorced parents with 2 controls of the same age and sex. They found that the grades of these children and their controls were similar, but that children of manual workers had a lower GPA than children of professional or higher level nonmanual workers.

The effect of divorce on children indicates the need for effective preventative interventions. The cycle of divorce for future generations of children needs to be broken, and the effects of divorce mediated so that the impact of such an event does not lead to permanent damage, impairment, ill health and inadequate socio-emotional functioning.

To be discussed are moderating variables that impact on children in a divorce situation, to facilitate or impede their adjustment. It is assumed that if relevant professionals, parents and teachers were more aware of which variables facilitated or impeded children's post-divorce adjustment that program interventions, as well as parenting and teaching skills, could be appropriately adjusted towards this end.

### **1.2.3. Moderating Factors Affecting Children's Post-Divorce/Separation Adjustment.**

Hess and Camara (1979) state that:

*"Divorce potentially interrupts the normal progress of development by threatening primary bonds, creating conflicts of loyalty that require developmentally inappropriate levels of sensitivity and thought, and disrupts internalized conceptions of social reality. These combine to absorb the mental concentration and emotional energy of the child. The degree to which the divorce is handled by parents in a way that minimizes these effects will help determine whether there are behavioral consequences for the child, and how severe these effects will be" (p.82).*

Parental divorce or separation poses a great challenge to the age-appropriate capacity of children to make the required adjustments to this life transition. Divorce is no longer viewed by most recent theorists as a 'disaster' but as a 'crisis' or 'turning point'. Kraus, (1979) suggested that this 'turning point' could have positive or negative outcomes for children of divorce depending on certain critical variables.

Some of these variables included:

- the age, gender and temperament of the child;
- the length of time since parents have been separated;
- the degree of ongoing conflict between divorced parents;
- the amount of environmental changes the child experiences;

- the extra-familial support from which the child can access help;
- the availability of the non-custodial parent;
- the level of social cognition the child employs in understanding the reasons for his/her parent's divorce, and the ongoing divorce process;
- the quality of relationship the child experiences with his/her non-custodial, custodial and possible stepparent;
- the disciplining procedures used by custodial and non-custodial parents;
- the changes in family structure the child has to adjust to.

These variables will be discussed in greater detail in Section 3.4.2 in which the measuring instruments used to assess the impact of these moderating variables on mediating processes are described.

When supportive intervention strategies to facilitate children's post-divorce adjustment are considered, it is important to not only understand how the moderating variables listed above impact on 'children of divorce', but it is also important to understand the age-appropriate developmental tasks, and the specific psychological tasks, children in middle childhood need to accomplish.

#### 1.2.4. Psychosocial Developmental Needs of Children in Middle Childhood.

In middle childhood children's thoughts and feelings are predominantly family-focused, although their world of social relationships are expanding through extra-familial educational, recreational and religious involvements. *"Their parents are of central importance and whether the family is happy or not profoundly influences how children feel about the world and their place within it"* (Clarke-Stewart & Friedman, 1987, p.484).

Children begin to develop a sense of moral rightness couched in fairly concrete cognitive terms. Behaviors, events and people are perceived as either right or wrong. When this way of thinking is applied in a divorce situation children are confronted with loyalty conflicts. Initially they need to see one parent as right and the other as wrong, one parent as blameworthy for the divorce/separation event, and the other parent as a victim. They are also aware of their parents making moral choices, and

realize the parental decision to divorce was not an inevitability, but a choice. As they do not, as yet, have the cognitive skills to fully understand the reasons for these choices they are left with feelings of frustration, anger, and of shame and embarrassment at their changed family structure and circumstances.

A developmental challenge in middle childhood is learning to problem-solve, which, if accomplished successfully, gives the child a feeling of pride, competency and control. Research by Wallerstein and Kelly (1980) indicates that divorce may disrupt this developing sense of industry and competence. They report children may focus inward and narrow their intellectual and social horizons, thus making it difficult for themselves to understand others' perspectives and to experience meaningful peer relationships. CODIP focuses several weekly sessions on the mastery of social problem-solving skills and perspectives.

Other developmental tasks at this age are the accomplishment of good interpersonal skills, and a greater sense of self-identity. The development of the child's self-esteem is particularly vulnerable at this age as the child begins to develop a sense of self apart from family relationships, and begins to receive feedback from peers, teachers and significant others. How well family relationships are functioning can have negative, positive or concurrent effects in terms of the child's developing self-esteem. Children now have the cognitive capacity to see things from *"...their own and a friend's point of view, and they can also appreciate the inherent pleasure and value of a friendship."* (Clarke-Stewart & Friedman, 1987, p.493). Children in middle childhood begin to infer more from people's internal states and thoughts than they did before. Thus children in middle childhood are particularly supported by an intervention that fosters group participation and peer relationships.

Kalter et al. (1984) indicate that divorce-engendered conflicts and disruptions in socio-emotional functioning are best ameliorated through early intervention; and repeated intervention at each developmental stage when new tasks need to be accomplished. CODIP has been structured so as to address these age-appropriate developmental challenges, as well as the specific psychological tasks children of divorce need to accomplish. These specific psychological tasks are described below.

### 1.2.5. Psychological divorce-related tasks addressed within the Children of Divorce Intervention Program.

Over and above the age-appropriate developmental tasks children of divorce need to accomplish, they have specific divorce-related psychological tasks they need to attend to as well. The commonality of these tasks for most children of divorce, regardless of their age or gender, were noted by researchers in this field, Wallerstein and her colleagues, who conducted a longitudinal study of 60 'White' middle-class divorcing families over a ten-year period (1974, 1975, 1976, 1979, 1980, 1983, 1987 and 1989). They explain that these psychological tasks are made up of perceived threats to psychic integrity, and carry their own "...*special set of challenges and added burdens... They are conceptualized as being hierarchical, and as following a particular time sequence, beginning with the critical event of the parental separation, and culminating in late adolescence and young adulthood*" (Wallerstein, 1983, p.231). They list these tasks as being:

- Task 1: Acknowledging the reality of the marital rupture;
- Task 2: Disengaging from parental conflict and distress,  
and resuming customary pursuits;
- Task 3: Resolving loss;
- Task 4: Resolving anger and self-blame;
- Task 5: Accepting the permanence of the divorce; and
- Task 6: Achieving realistic hope regarding relationships.

Pedro-Carroll (1985b) takes these psychological tasks into serious consideration when developing the Children of Divorce Intervention Program. Sessions one to three in CODIP address the first task - '*Acknowledging the reality of the marital rupture*' - by facilitating the expression of children's divorce-related feelings around this issue.

Task 3, '*Resolving Loss*', is addressed as children communicate feelings of sadness and grief about relevant divorce-related issues. Examples of loss are: the decreased availability of the non-custodial parent; the loss of familiar friends and surroundings if the child has to move to a new home or school; or the loss of the known family structure that has now been replaced by single-parent, or reconstituted family structures.

In sections four to seven, 'Social Problem Solving' skills are taught. These skills support the accomplishment of Task 2 - *'Disengaging from parental conflict and distress; as well as resuming age-appropriate normal daily pursuits.'* The children are taught which divorce-related problems they can solve, and which they cannot; which are child-related problems and which are adult-related problems. For example they cannot stop the ongoing conflict between estranged parents, but they can tell parents how uncomfortable it makes them feel when they communicate their feelings of anger, jealousy etc. through their children. One child explained - *"Every time you direct darts of anger towards each other, they go straight through me."* Children are encouraged not to expend the major part of their emotional energy on bringing their separated parents back together again, and are encouraged to engage in normal age-relevant pursuits. Prior to developing problem-solving skills that help children to take control in their own lives in this way, children may perceive their daily functioning to be out of their control and the divorce situation to be an uncontrollable event that had been imposed upon them by their parents.

Sessions eight and nine of the program deal with the fourth task - *'Resolving anger and self-blame'*. Children are taught appropriate verbal and non-verbal ways of expressing their anger. Children learn that anger is a normal, transient feeling that should be conveyed in appropriate ways. They are taught that anger should be communicated in a manner in which people or possessions are not hurt or destroyed, but feelings are released. Children begin to understand it is not helpful for them when intense anger is contained for as long as possible only to 'erupt' in an uncontrollable way; nor is it helpful for them when their anger is repressed inward and leads to feelings of hopelessness and depression.

In the final sessions of the program, sessions ten to twelve, task 6 is addressed - *'Achieving realistic hope regarding relationships'*. This is facilitated through the 'Panel of Experts' technique where children offer each other advice about divorce-related questions, for example:

- "Can a child from a divorced family ever be happy?"
- "Because you are in a single parent family does that mean your family is inferior to other families?"

- "If your mother begins to date somebody else does that mean she does not have enough love left for you?"

Children are encouraged to consider their family structure to be as functional as other family structures, and to understand that the family relationships in their 'different' family structures can also be warm, loving and meaningful in many different ways. Children are encouraged to give other members in the group positive feedback, and to consider the positive changes that have happened as a result of the divorce. This too facilitates hope for the future.

Task 5 - '*Accepting the permanence of the divorce*' - seems to be a more difficult psychological task to accomplish. However being in a group with other children who are going through the same life transition normalizes the divorce experience. The group is experienced as a safe place to share divorce-related feelings. Being with group members who may be further along in the divorce process helps children understand and accept the permanence of the divorce, and to realize that other children have survived this life transition and they can too. Divorce-related issues pertinent to intimate and more permanent relationships, is often a task that is only addressed during the developmental stages of adolescence and early adulthood, as issues of dating and marriage become more significant. As Kalter and Plunkett (1984) state, "*At each new nodal developmental point new normative developmental stresses are encountered and previous conflicts are likely to resurface, both to complicate development and to provide an opportunity for their re-working*" (p.614).

#### **1.2.6. The Benefits of a Group Intervention, and how the Children of Divorce Intervention program evolved.**

The development of preventative programs for children adjusting to their parents' divorce was initiated in 1979 by Guernsey and Jordan, and in 1980 by Effron. These pilot schemes lead to positive clinical impressions, but were not adequately evaluated to provide validated results. Kalter, Pickar and Lesowitz (1984) developed a school-based program to facilitate children's adjustment, and Stolberg, Cullen and Garrison (1982, 1985) developed the Divorce Adjustment Program (DAP) for children between the ages of eight and thirteen years. The DAP was part of a larger Divorce Adjustment Project that included parents. Within this project subjects were assigned

to one of four conditions: a '*child only*' intervention; a '*parent only*' intervention; a '*child and parent*' simultaneous intervention; or a '*no treatment*' control group. Results indicated that the '*child-only*' intervention facilitated the best post-divorce adjustment in children. As a consequence of these findings Stolberg and Mahler (1990) refined the '*child-only*' intervention and added a homework component that parents and children worked on together to promote and consolidate skill acquisition. It was upon the findings of these studies that Pedro-Carroll and Cowen initiated the development of the Children of Divorce Intervention Program in 1985. Program content and goals are described in Chapter Two.

There are two basic components of CODIP: the facilitation of social support, and the development of skill building. CODIP facilitates the development of interpersonal skills pertinent to children in middle childhood. The group intervention strategy used is a more appropriate therapeutic tool in working with children of this age, than techniques of Play Therapy which are more appropriate for younger children, or counseling sessions which are more appropriate for older children. Specific CODIP goals outlined in Section 2.2. are best facilitated through group intervention techniques.

One of the advantages of a group intervention is that children within the group feel they have a common identity, they are all 'in the same boat'. Another advantage is that the divorce experience is normalized, and feelings of isolation and stigma are reduced (Kalter et. al., 1984; Lesowitz, Kalter, Pickar, Chetchik & Schaefer, 1987; Pedro-Carroll & Cowen, 1985). Group dynamics facilitate the social cohesion necessary for children to feel safe enough to share painful and uncomfortable feelings. The group is a social microcosm in which children learn better interpersonal skills, children learn from each other and teach other. Yalom (1975) says the feeling of being helped and of helping others gives group members a feeling of empowerment and control over their life situations, as well as a heightened sense of self-worth. Consequently the group is a therapeutic and educative milieu for peer-initiated learning. It is also a place in which issues of loss can be addressed, during the group process, and particularly when the group is ending. Children's feelings in terms of loss-related issues are dealt with as a consequence of having to deal with group



termination (Grych & Fincham, 1992; Kalter et. al., 1983; Pedro-Carroll & Cowen, 1985; Stolberg & Garrison, 1985).

A group intervention structure facilitates greater access to therapeutic help for more children at one time. It is accessible to financially deprived children of a lower economic status. In the light of reported statistics, and the paucity of professional intervention, a program that reaches as many children as possible is essential.

#### **1.2.7. Advantages of a School-Based CODIP Intervention.**

All children go to school and therefore school-based programs are accessible to most children. Children's coping skills and perceptions about divorce may be more amenable to change than parental attitudes or other environmental factors. Thus it may be difficult to reduce stress in a child's life due to uncontrollable external factors, but one can facilitate the development of appropriate coping skills that will enable the child to cope with the divorce process (Grych & Fincham, 1992; Kurdek, 1981). A school-based program operates in an already developed network of support systems of peers and teaching staff. Group-initiated peer support can continue even once the program has ended. Divorce-related experiences are normalized and appropriately qualified school personnel can be trained to administer CODIP so that the program can become self-perpetuating (Grych & Fincham, 1992; Hodges & Bloom, 1986; Pedro-Carroll & Cowen, 1987).

## Chapter Two

### ***Pilot study and initial experiences with the Children of Divorce Intervention Program (CODIP).***

Before implementing and evaluating the Children of Divorce Intervention Program (CODIP), it was considered important to learn from previous research outcomes, program weaknesses and methodological limitations. In this chapter previous research conducted by Pedro-Carroll and her colleagues (1985, 1986, 1989 & 1992) is briefly described. Thereafter a description of the actual program is outlined. Finally the knowledge gained from a pilot study and initial application of CODIP in a South African context is discussed.

#### **2.1. Evaluation of the Children of Divorce Intervention Program as researched by Pedro-Carroll and her colleagues.**

CODIP is a school-based group intervention developed by Joanne Pedro-Carroll and Emory Cowen in 1985. It is a program that evolved out of the Divorce Adjustment Project conducted in 1983 by Stolberg, Cullen, Garrison and Brophy. In terms of the ecosystemic framework, as defined by Bronfenbrenner (1979), The Children of Divorce Intervention Program is seen as a source of social support at the exosystemic level. It is described, by the authors, as being a preventative intervention program that helps to avert the possible long-lasting effects of parental divorce on children's emotional and behavioral functioning.

The program has two major components - the provision of social support, and the development of appropriate coping skills. The specific program goals that contextualize these two program components are:

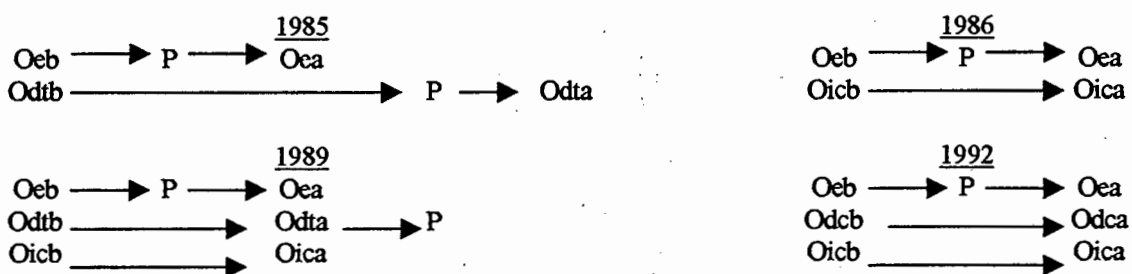
- the provision of a supportive group environment;
- the encouragement of expression of feelings;

- the clarification of misconceptions;
- the enhancement of coping skills; and
- the enhancement of perceptions of self and of the family.

The program was run by trained facilitators, and was originally developed for White middle class primary school children aged between 9 and 12 years. The program has since been extended and adapted to meet the needs of younger children, aged 7 to 9 years (1986, 1989), and to children of a lower socio-economic status (1989, 1992). CODIP has been extensively field tested with more than 430 children in 50 schools in the Rochester area of New York, USA. The CODIP model has since been widely disseminated throughout the United States and other countries, including New Zealand and Australia and for the first time it was implemented in South Africa.

CODIP was extensively evaluated in 1985, 1986, 1989 and 1992. To follow is a brief summary of these studies. Of specific interest is the research design used, methodological limitations encountered, and research outcomes for children participating in CODIP. A knowledge of these factors was considered to be important as research and program implementation guidelines for this study.

Pedro-Carroll and her colleagues used an experimental research design that progressed in the following way.



**Figure 1.** Change in research design used by Pedro-Carroll and her colleagues over time (1985, 1986, 1989 & 1992).

O = research outcomes; P = program intervention; e = experimental group; b = pre-program assessment; a = post-program assessment; dt = delayed treatment group; dc = divorce control group; ic = intact comparison group.

For example Oeb = Pre-program research outcomes for the experimental group

Odtb = Post-program research outcomes for delayed treatment group.

In their initial study in 1985 an experimental group of 40 white children from divorced middle class families was compared to a delayed treatment group of 32 demographically matched children also from divorced homes. All the children were in their fourth to sixth grades at school. The strength of this design was that subject groups were strongly comparable - the children were demographically matched, from similar standards at school and were all from divorced homes. The only difference between the groups is that the experimental group participated in CODIP and the delayed treatment group did not do so before the pre-/post-program comparisons between the two groups were made. In 1986 a more distinct between-group comparison was made between second and third grade school children. 54 white middle class children from divorced homes (the experimental group) were compared to 78 demographically matched children from intact families (the intact comparison group).

Post-program research outcomes are detailed in chapter four of this study and are not commented on here as the focus of this research survey of the work of Pedro-Carroll and her colleagues is to understand the research designs they used and methodological limitations they encountered.

The methodological limitations reported for the 1985 and 1986 studies were:

- i. A limited knowledge of the psychometric properties of the Classroom Adjustment Rating Scale (CASP) and the Parent Evaluation Form (PEF). These scales did however have face validity and test-retest reliability;
- ii. The rating of scales was completed by those who had a 'stake' in the program;
- iii. The effectiveness of specific program components were not evaluated;
- iv. Long-term effects of the program were not evaluated; and

There was a desire by the researchers to assess the generalizability of the program to children of older and younger age groups, and to children living in different socio-economic circumstances.

In 1989 a research design was compiled that combined aspects of the 1985 and 1986 studies. Second and third grade children (aged 7-9 years) were assigned to an experimental group of 52 children from divorced families; to a delayed treatment group of 52 children also from divorced families, who were to participate in CODIP at a later stage; and to an intact comparison group of 85 children from intact families. A chi-square statistical analysis of subjects indicated that the three samples were proportional by sex, grade, and racial composition.

The methodological and research design limitations reported for the 1989 study were that:

- i. Children were not randomly assigned to the treatment and divorce control group. There were practical issues that made this impossible: time-limitations, the school curriculum imposed, and the attitudes of some parents towards their children's inclusion in the program.
- ii. Subjects in the divorce control/delayed treatment group were involved in CODIP for a shorter period of time than the experimental group, thus making the groups less comparable.
- iii. Results were less reliable owing to the rater bias of parents, teachers etc. who had a 'stake' in the program. Alpert-Gillis et al. (1989) suggested rater bias may be minimized if the children's behaviors being assessed were as concrete as possible. They also suggested the use of 'blind' professional raters in future.
- iv. Again, although CDAS and PEF measures have face validity as well as acceptable reliability and internal consistency (alpha of 0,84), the psychometric properties of key measures had still not been fully established.

Alpert-Gillis et al. (1989) offered the following suggestions for future research:

- To investigate ways in which positive program outcomes could be generalized to classroom situations;
- To conduct longitudinal studies in order to ascertain the degree to which program interventions endured;

- To extend CODIP implementation to other 'at risk' groups of children, for example children of alcoholic parents, children who are emotionally disturbed, or to children who have experienced the loss of a parent due to death or chronic illness.
- To identify child, familial and situational factors that may predict program outcomes.

In 1992 the research design used was similar to that of the 1989 study, but there was a divorce control group that did not participate in CODIP as compared to the delayed treatment group used in the 1989 study. The participants in the program were fourth to sixth grade children from lower socio-economic circumstances. In applying the CODIP sessions the same basic guidelines were used, but certain modifications to the program were made to accommodate the social realities of the target group.

Methodological limitations that made these results less valid were:

- i) The selection bias with which children were placed in the experimental/treatment group or the divorce control/delayed treatment group. Divorced parents of less troubled children may have opted for the control 'child development' group. Random assignment of children would have been preferable but referral practicalities made this difficult. This makes generalizability of results less significant.
- ii) Some of the children in the experimental group had experienced more stressors than others;
- iii) Subjects in this study had parents who had on average been divorced for a longer period of time, 4-5 years, as opposed to children whose parents had been divorced for shorter periods of time in previous studies. Hence the predicted need for a two-year adjustment period as advocated by Hetherington (1985) was not validated by these research findings. It is apparent that 'children of divorce' contend with needing to make ongoing adjustments during the divorce process that may extend over the majority of their childhood years (Wallerstein, 1983b).
- iv) There had been no follow-up study.

The research design of this study attempted a more extensive evaluation of CODIP, and in particular Alpert-Gillis et al.'s (1989) suggestions for future research were noted. The latter researchers suggested a) that child, familial and situational factors that may better predict program outcomes be identified, and b) that more long term effects of program interventions be assessed. It was also noted that Pedro-Carroll et al.'s most recent (1992) research indicated that the personal functioning of children participating in CODIP improved despite socio-economic diversity, length of time parents had been separated, and despite the different number of stressors children in this group had to deal with in their own particular post-divorce situation. In order to address these findings and suggestions an additional research focus was introduced - the attempt to understand the mediating processes that positively or negatively impacted on 'children of divorce' who were participating in CODIP. Several mediating processes external to the child from macrosystemic, exosystemic and microsystemic origins were considered as well as the mediating processes affecting a child internally from an ontogenetic perspective. (The latter ecosystemic components are explained in section 3.4 of the next chapter.) Mediating processes help us understand the link between the predictor variable (divorce) and the response variable (the adjustment of children and their families). They are different to moderating variables which define the person and situation affected by the predictor variable. The age of a child, and the length of time parents have been separated/divorced are moderating variables that affect how the child will experience the predictor variable of divorce.

The research design chosen was of a quasi-experimental nature, and results were quantitatively as well as thematically analyzed. The overall research design used was structured in accordance with Kurdek's (1981) application of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecosystemic framework. There were no delayed treatment, divorce control or intact comparison groups, instead four different groups of children participated in CODIP. Many moderating factors and mediating processes impacting on children's post-divorce adjustment were assessed, and any changes in their adjustment, or their parents' adjustment, during program intervention or in the fifteen months thereafter, were noted.

The methodological weaknesses that were not adequately addressed in this study were the problem of rater bias; specific program components were not individually assessed; the program was not extended to other groups of children 'at risk'; and ways of generalizing program outcomes to the classroom situation were not considered.

To follow is an outline of the Children of Divorce Intervention Program, session by session.

## **2.2. Program Outline.**

The Children of Divorce Intervention Program has a sequential curriculum that involves the following basic objectives: providing a supportive group environment; identifying and expressing appropriate divorce-related feelings; clarifying divorce-related misconceptions; enhancing coping skills – specifically problem-solving skills and skills that facilitate the appropriate expression of anger; and enhancing children's perceptions of themselves, family members and their 'alternate' family structures. The program, which is conducted for an hour each week, for twelve weeks, is outlined below.

### ***Session One – Getting to know each other.***

The aim of the first session is for children to become acquainted, and to begin to express their feelings and experiences pertaining to their parents' divorce. Children begin to experience the group as a safe place where they can attain peer support and understanding. The children share information about themselves, for example their hobbies, likes and dislikes, family structure etc. The divorce process for each group member is normalized as children begin to realize there are others in the group who are similar to themselves in terms of their family structure, the divorce situation they are experiencing, or in terms of the interests they share.

As the main objective of CODIP is to facilitate children's post-divorce adjustment, group leaders introduce this focus by asking children to express how they feel when the word



'divorce' is mentioned. Many feelings were expressed: grumpy, not nice, angry, scared, happy, relieved, sad, embarrassed, worried, feel funny inside, nervous, weird etc.

The group session ends for the day with group members choosing a group name and symbol. The purpose of this activity is to further facilitate group cohesion and involvement. Some of the names chosen reflected how children felt about themselves, or how they perceived the purpose of the group program. Some of the names chosen indicated that 'children of divorce' did not feel the same as other children: The Goof Troop, Anamaniacs, or the Secret Seven. Other names indicated how children felt about the containment and support of the group: The Super Safe Group and the OCN Relief Group; whereas other group names indicated the purpose of the group: the Problem Solvers.

### ***Session Two – Understanding changes in the family.***

The goals of the second session are to further encourage group solidarity and the expression of divorce-related feelings; to understand some of the reasons divorce occurs, and through this understanding to deal with some divorce-related misconceptions. Group leaders also encourage children to begin to identify people-resources outside of the group with whom they can discuss their feelings and concerns. The Manual advocates the use of a filmstrip '*When Parents Separate*' (Disney Education Media, 1980) to facilitate children's understanding of what divorce is, reasons why parents separate, and feelings about attribution of blame for the divorce event. As this filmstrip was not accessible in South Africa, two sections of a local video called 'Mom and Dad are Divorced but I'm okay' (Divorce restoration Ministries, Jasmin Films) were used. The first section of the video described a scene where a little boy, Stevie, was distressed when his divorced father did not attend a special occasion, his birthday. Stevie spoke of the sadness he felt because he did not see his father as much anymore and he felt that his father had divorced him. The second section of the video illustrated that Stevie felt responsible for his

parent's divorce, because so often when they fought it was because they could not agree on an instruction Stevie should be given.

During this session children give reasons for their parents' divorces. The reasons given help group leaders deal with the divorce-related misconception that children are responsible for their parents' divorces.

### ***Session Three – Coping with changes.***

The goal of this session is to help children understand how they're own, and their parents' behavior, changes after the divorce/separation event. Feelings around these changes are expressed, and children think about ways in which they can cope with these changes.

The Manual advocates the use of a second filmstrip, *'After the Divorce'* (Disney Education media, 1980). In place of the unavailable filmstrip a section of the aforementioned video was used. The content of the video described how the lifestyle and responsibilities of the custodial and non-custodial parent were often different. The custodial parent was depicted as dealing with many of the daily, routine, child-rearing responsibilities; whereas the non-custodial parent was depicted as enjoying many leisure time activities with their children.

Children listed how their parents' behavior had changed after the divorce/separation event. They described how they felt about these changes, and begun to understand that when parents treated them in a particular way it was sometimes attributable to the parent's own internal state, and not necessarily to the child's behavior. For example a non-custodial parent may visit infrequently not because their child is 'bad' but because visiting evokes painful or guilty feelings about the family situation they have left. Additional relevant material that was used if time allowed were several possible chapters of the book, *'Our Family Got a Divorce'* (Philips, 1979). The relevant chapters were entitled *'Parents have feelings too'*, *'I'm mad!'* and *'Changes'*. The chapters in this

book facilitated another goal of this session which was to encourage children to talk to parents and other caring people they trusted outside of the group about their feelings and about some of these changes. These books are not mentioned in the CODIP manual.

The session ends with children writing a story about a child whose parents had separated – how it all started, what the child experienced, and how this child felt things were going to turn out. Sometimes excerpts from the book *'My parents got a divorce'* (Sprague, 1992) were read to the children to give them some idea of how other children described their divorce experience. The latter book is also not mentioned in the CODIP manual.

#### ***Sessions 4, 5 & 6 – Social Problem Solving.***

These sessions focus on problems children are encountering, whether they are divorce-related problems or not. Many 'children of divorce' spend much emotional energy trying to resolve parent-focused issues, for example: trying to bring parents back together or trying to find ways of dealing with financial shortfalls. Children are encouraged to focus on their own problems and activities, and to disinvest their energy from trying to solve their parents' problems.

Children are taught several problem solving steps which they apply to real-life situations. Some of the problems children experienced were: having trouble with friends at school who were bullying and teasing them; feeling that parents were treating siblings differently; and not feeling happy with themselves. Many problems were issues over which children had little control, they could only express how they felt about what was happening. For example a child whose father kept refusing to pay for school and sporting equipment wrote down these feelings to share with his father: *"Dad, it's a parent's responsibility to buy things for their children's school and sports. When I have to ask for these things so many times I feel like you don't care enough about me."* Another child whose father continually promised to come and visit, and then did not arrive, was told by his son, *"Dad, every time I have to wait for you and I don't know when you are coming, I*

*feel uncertain and I can't get on with the other things I would like to do."* After writing down these feelings children role-played within the group how they would express their feelings to the relevant person. Role-playing the situation gave children the confidence and support to carry out the particular communication. Sometimes as a child allowed his/her parent to understand how they were experiencing a certain situation, the situation was resolved. The child was left with a feeling of mastery and confidence, and that he/she had some control over life's happenings and the relationships that were important.

### ***Session 7 – 'Panel of experts' on divorce.***

Some group members formed a 'panel' and others formed an 'audience'. Members of the 'panel' choose famous personalities they would like to represent. The 'audience' asked this 'panel of experts' certain questions, for example: *'Can children from divorced families be just as happy as children whose parents are married?'* As children participated on the 'panel of experts' or as a 'member of the audience' they re-identified common issues and misconceptions about the divorce process they were experiencing. Children's responses to questions like: *'Do children cause their parent's divorce?'* gave group leaders some feedback as to whether group members had dealt with this divorce-related misconception or not. Other questions like: *'Should parents wait until their children are grown-up before they get a divorce?'* lead to quite an extensive debate. Some children indicated it was more comfortable for them to live with single parents than to endure ongoing parental conflict; whereas other children felt that the losses they had experienced as a result of their divorce situations were so painful for them that they would have preferred to have been bigger and stronger before they had to deal with this life situation. In answering these questions children verbalized their feelings and practised the problem solving skills they had learnt. As children experienced their growing competence at solving their own problems, they withdrew from dealing with parent problems they could not solve. They felt a sense of enhanced competence and self-esteem as they experienced support and identification with fellow group members.

### ***Sessions 8 & 9 – Understanding and dealing with anger.***

According to Pedro-Carroll and Cowen (1987), the authors of CODIP:

*'Anger is among the most common reactions of latency-aged children to their parents' divorce. They're old enough to understand that divorce, unlike death, is not inevitable, and that their parents made a deliberate choice, that results in many (unhappy) changes and losses for them. Each of those realities precipitates feelings of anger. Learning how to express anger appropriately is thus an important part of an intervention for youngsters this age' (p.299).*

Sessions 8 and 9 helped children understand how their behavior and even their physical appearances change when they are angry. Children share the events in their lives that were making them feel this way. Some of these events were incidences of sibling rivalry or that they were not getting on with a teacher at school. Other anger-provoking situations were explained in the following way: *'Mom and dad talk badly about each other to me and I feel caught in the middle'* or *'Mom doesn't spend enough time with me because she is always out with her boyfriend'* etc. Children are taught that anger is a natural response to many situations, and that feeling angry does not hurt anyone or cause any problems, as long as anger is expressed, and as long as it is expressed in the right way. Children list ways of expressing anger that *'makes things better'* (good control) – 'cooling down', going for a walk, tearing newspaper, throwing a potato at a tree, writing down your feelings etc.; and ways of expressing anger that *'makes things worse'* (poor control) – kicking the dog, shouting abuse, running away etc. A particular skill the children are taught is how to express angry feelings by using an 'I' message. The latter technique helps children to take responsibility for the way they feel, instead of always blaming others. Throughout these two sessions children learn appropriate anger-control skills and they continue to problem solve and express their feelings.

At the end of the ninth session, termination issues are addressed, as only three group meetings remain.

### ***Session 10 – Focus on families.***

In this session group leaders help children understand that family relationships can be complicated, and that all families, whether parents are divorced or not, experience difficulties at times. Children are reminded how during the first session they told each other about the families they belonged to, some families were the same as their own, and other families were not. Children are asked to list different types of family structures. They also list what they would like to experience in their families – warmth, fun, love, security etc. They begin to realize that no matter what form their family takes, they can still experience these types of relationships within their families. Additional books that could be used to stimulate discussion in these areas were: *'All Kinds of Families'* (Simon, 1976) and *'The Girls and Boys Book About Stepfamilies'* (Gardner, 1982).

Issues pertaining to single-parent families, parental dating and remarriage, and the challenges that face reconstituted families, are dealt with through a similar 'panel of experts' technique as was used in the seventh session. Some of the questions the 'panel' addressed were: *'Why do some children worry when their parents decide to get married again?'* or *'Your mom has met a new man. You would like her to take you to the opening of Macdonald's. She says she can't because she has already made plans to go out with him. What do you do?'*

At the end of the session group member's feelings about the termination of the group are discussed more fully.

### ***Session Eleven – 'You're a special person exercise.***

The goals of this session are to evaluate how competent children feel with the problem solving and anger control skills they have learnt; and to create realistic hope for the future. Group leaders initiate the session by saying, *'Parents divorce in the hope that things can improve in the future and that there will be less conflict'*. Children are asked

what positive changes have occurred for them since parents have separated. Some positive changes children cited were that they saw their father more often (these were children who had not had much contact with their fathers when their parents were married, because fathers had time-consuming work commitments), that they got several sets of presents from different family units for their birthdays and at Christmas time, and some children felt they had step-parents they enjoyed to be with.

After this exercise children are encouraged to compile a 'warm, fuzzy, list'. Children write on a piece of paper all the things they value about different group members and their contribution within the group process. Children feel validated through this exercise, and begin to perceive their special strengths and their ability to contribute meaningfully in to the lives of others.

At the end of the group, termination issues were again discussed. The children also plan the activities and food arrangements for the 'end-of-program' party. A picture was taken of the children. This picture, together with a list of children's names and phone numbers, as well as the problem solving steps and anger control skills they have learnt, is placed on a colorful piece of cardboard to be presented to group members at their last meeting together. This placard reminds the children of their group experience and the skills they have learnt. It makes it easier for them to contact friends they have made within the group who continue to be a source of support after program completion. This was an innovation introduced that was not suggested in the manual.

### ***Session 12 – Termination.***

During the final session children and group leaders share their group experience and their feelings about the ending of the program. Many children found it difficult to leave the group and requested that it continue for the remainder of the year. Children are encouraged to identify and turn to people in their lives who they know they can trust and who will support them. The manual suggested that parents should be invited to this last

session and that in their presence children would be presented with certificates for 'caring and sharing' within the group. For practical reasons, children did not invite parents to the last group session, and they were not given certificates, but instead the placard prepared the previous week. The enjoyment of the party culminates the group experience for these children.

The contents of this program were applied in a pilot study to be discussed.

### **2.3. Pilot Study Conducted.**

#### **2.3.1. Subjects:**

The subjects were four boys and three girls aged 9 to 12 years. All the children were from White families of varying economic status, except for one boy who was from the so-called 'Coloured' group.

#### **2.3.2. Program Implementation:**

The Children of Divorce Intervention Program was conducted over a 9-week period as opposed to a 12-week period as suggested in the manual. This was necessary as the co-therapist had time-limitations in terms of his involvement in the program. Instead of one session per week, sometimes two sessions were covered in one week over a longer period of time, normally on a Saturday morning. Owing to this program being a pilot study to familiarize the researcher with program implementation, extensive pre-program and post-program assessments were not conducted. Although program implementation and outcomes were discussed each week, the content of this will not be expounded upon. Only the relevant issues for future program implementation and research are outlined below.



### ***2.3.3. Lessons learnt through program implementation:***

1. There was a disadvantage to CODIP being implemented over a shorter period of time than advocated in the manual as some of the skills learnt were not adequately consolidated by the end of the group program; and some of the feelings evoked around divorce-related issues were only partially resolved. The advantage however of a few longer sessions was the facilitation of a less pressurized space of time in which those group members who found it difficult to express or access their feelings, were better able to do so.
2. The researcher found the program appropriately structured, yet flexible enough to deal with issues that evolved unpredictably. For example the issue as to whether group members felt comfortable with group sessions being placed on video or not. This issue was approached as group discussion that led to early group cohesiveness.
3. Experience with CODIP made it apparent that the program had been so compiled that it could be easily adapted to other groups of 'at risk' children of a similar age. CODIP could be adapted to children who were not facing any particular life crisis but needed to develop appropriate interpersonal skills. The program could also be adapted to children whose parents had an alcohol or drug dependency problem, or children who had experienced the loss of a parent or a family member.
4. The researcher and her co-therapist found it most beneficial to hold a pre-program parents meeting to explain program content, as well as to discuss issues of confidentiality and regularity of their children's attendance. As a result of the group support parents experienced in this meeting they requested mid-program and post-program parent meetings as well. Details of the children's participation in the group were not disclosed at these meetings, but general themes were discussed that related to how the children were progressing. Parents were taught the skills children were learning within the group, for example, 'social problem-solving' skills and appropriate 'anger control' skills. Parents were taught these skills so that they could

consolidate their implementation at home. Parents were also taught parenting techniques that would better facilitate their communication and their relationships with their children. The parenting skills taught were based on those advocated by Thomas Gordon in his book *Parent Effectiveness Training* (1978).

5. As a consequence of these initial parent meetings all subsequent CODIP groups conducted had a similar pre-program, mid-program and post-program parent meeting component. In addition, at the parents' request, additional post-CODIP parenting groups were established. These latter groups had two different foci - one focus was on '*adult adjustment in a post-divorce situation*'; and the other focus was on the '*training of parents in more advanced parenting skills*'. Research conducted by Stolberg, Cullen and Garrison (1982, 1985) during their development of the Divorce Adjustment Project assigned children and their parents to one of four conditions: a 'child only' intervention; a 'parent only' intervention; a 'child and parent' simultaneous intervention; or a 'no treatment' control group. Results indicated that the '*child-only*' intervention facilitated the best post-divorce adjustment in children. In contrast my findings indicated that parent support groups run in parallel with children's participation in CODIP, lead to increased involvement of non-custodial parents with their children, and gave parents a sense of support that facilitated their own post-divorce adjustment. The success of the parent meetings run in parallel with CODIP meetings on children's post-divorce adjustment could have been attributed to parents and children learning similar skills, and to the parent meetings functioning primarily as a support for their children's participation in CODIP, and only secondarily to facilitate their own post-divorce adjustment. Many theorists have found that children's adjustment is facilitated by their parent's own adjustment (Grych & Fincham, 1992; Kurdek, 1981).
6. Personal feedback was given to each parent in a way that did not betray the confidentiality of group participants so that each child could be given appropriate post-program support.

## Chapter Three

### *Methodology*

#### **3.1. Subject Selection.**

##### ***3.1.1. Acquisition of subjects.***

There were several ways in which subjects were acquired for participation in the Children of Divorce Intervention Program. There was no pre-program screening of subjects in terms of gender, length of time parents were separated/divorced or family structure. There was no divorce-control group or intact comparison group. The only criteria specified for subject selection were those given below.

##### **1. Parental Consent**

- 3 The child must have experienced his/her parents' separation or divorce.
- 3 The child must be aged between 8 and 12 years.
- 3 The child must not be severely emotionally or behaviorally disturbed as pre-determined by pre-program assessments of child and family functioning.

The research design of this study developed with the understanding that 'children of divorce' experienced many different combinations of supports and stressors in their unique post-divorce process. It was difficult to control for all of these variables in a pre-program subject selection process. Instead variables impacting on the subjects selected to participate in CODIP, and their families, were assessed from a macrosystemic/socio-cultural context, an exosystemic context, a microsystemic/familial relationships context and in terms of children's ontogenic functioning. These variables and ecosystemic contexts are more fully described and explained in section 3.4.

The rationale for this approach to subject selection was also based on CODIP research findings (Pedro-Carroll et al., 1992) that the personal functioning of children who participated in the program improved despite uncontrolled variables like socio-economic status, diverse lengths of time since parental separation and divorce; and

despite children having had different numbers of stressors to deal with in their particular divorce situation.

Methods of subject collection included:

- Advertisements in local newspapers;
- Posters displayed in strategic places, for example: local libraries, shopping malls, schools and Social Service agencies.
- Addressing relevant parent groups interested in program details.
- Advising local professionals – social workers, psychologists, medical practitioners and lawyers – of CODIP, so that they could refer clients who they felt would benefit from program participation.

### ***3.1.2. Characteristics of research subjects.***

Children participated in four Children of Divorce Intervention Programs. A summary of the characteristics of these children is described in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Summary of research subjects' characteristics.

<i>Groups</i>	<i>Co-therapist</i>	<i>No. of Group Members.</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>Age Range</i>	<i>Length of time Since parents separated</i>	<i>Length of time since parents divorced</i>	<i>Length of time parents married</i>
<b>Group 1- 'Adolescent' group</b>	Art Voters	6	4 girls 2 boys	10years 8months to 13years 3months (Range - 2years 7months)	1month to 7years 3months (Range- 7years 2months)	Divorce. Pending.(3 parents) 2years 9months to 6years 6months (Range- 3years 9months)	4years 1month to 19years 10months (Range-15years 9months)
<b>Group 2- 'Middle' group</b>	Dehlia Kaplan	7	3 girls 4 boys	8years 11months to 12years 5months (Range- 3years 6months)	1month to 10years (Range- 9years 11months)	Divorce Pending (2parents) 2years 9months to 9years 9months (Range-7years)	3years to 19years 10months (Range-16years 10months)
<b>Group 3- 'Junior' group</b>	Garth Stevens	7	4 girls 3 boys	8years 2months to 9years 2months (Range- 1year)	1month to 5years 1month (Range- 5years)	Divorce Pending (2parents) 1year 3months to 4years 9months (Range-3years 3months)	4years 8months to 10years 8months (Range-6years)
<b>Group 4- 'School' group</b>	Dehlia Kaplan	8	4 girls 4 boys	7years 5months to 12years 4months (Range- 4years 11months)	1year to 12years 2months (Range- 11years 2months)	3months to 11years 5months (Range-11years 2months)	3years to 11years 6months (Range-8years 6months)
<b>Total</b>		28	15 girls 13 boys	7years 5months to 13years 3months (Range- 5years 10months)	1month to 12years 2months (Range- 11years 1month)	Divorce Pending (7parents) 3months to 11years 5months (Range-11years 2months)	3years to 19years 10months (Range-16years 10months)

Table 1. Summary of research subjects' characteristics (cont.).

<i>Groups</i>	<i>Custodial Parent</i>	<i>Access to Non-Custodial Parent.</i>	<i>Income of parents</i>	<i>Race group</i>
<i>Group 1- 'Adolescent' group</i>	5 mothers 1 father	4 x every 2 <sup>nd</sup> weekend 1 child's parent died during program intervention. 1 x contact in school holidays	5 x R2200 or more 1 x less than R500	3 'White' 3 'Colored'
<i>Group 2- 'Middle' group</i>	6 mothers 1 father	5 x every 2 <sup>nd</sup> weekend 1 child's parent died during program intervention. 1 x contact in school holidays	5 x R2200 or more 1 x less than R500 1 x R1400-R2199	6 'White' 1 'Colored'
<i>Group 3- 'Junior' group</i>	7 mothers	3 x every 2 <sup>nd</sup> weekend 2 x very little contact with local parent 1 x contact in school holidays.	5 x R2200 or more 1 x R1400 – R2199 1 x unemployed	4 'White' 3 'Colored'
<i>Group 4- 'School' group</i>	8 mothers	5 x every 2 <sup>nd</sup> weekend 2 x no contact at all 1 x irregular contact with parent who lived elsewhere.	5 x R2200 or more 2 x R14400 – R2199 1 x unknown	8 'White'
<i>Total</i>	26 mothers 2 fathers	13 x every 2 <sup>nd</sup> weekend 2 children's parent died during program intervention. 3 x contact in school holidays 4 x very little / no contact with local parent 1 x irregular contact with distant parent.	20 x R2200 4 x R1400 – R2199 1 x less than R500 1 x unemployed	21 'White' 7 'Colored'

### 3.2. Program Implementation Process.

One to three weeks before CODIP was implemented the questionnaires listed in Table 2 (section 3.4.1.) were administered. Once the questionnaires had been completed by the children themselves, by parents, by teachers and group leaders, CODIP was initiated. Each group had a weekly time slot that ran for a 75-minute period of time. Each week a stipulated session from the Manual was sequentially carried out. There were twelve sessions in all that were conducted over the same number of weeks. Weekly the researcher and co-therapists met together to plan for the next session, and to assimilate feedback about the progress of each child participating in the four different groups.

Parents, both mothers and fathers, attended pre-program meeting for parents one week before the first CODIP session. Issues of time, group rules and confidentiality were addressed. Some ways of facilitating children's post-divorce adjustment were shared, and relevant parenting skills taught. Parents experienced the group as a place in which they themselves not only learnt post-divorce coping skills, but also where they shared a sense of camaraderie and group support. As a consequence of this group experience parents requested further meetings which were held mid-program and post-program. At the mid-program meeting parents were taught the same problem-solving and appropriate divorce control skills that the children were learning during program participation. Parents were asked to encourage their children with these newly learnt skills so that they could be consolidated at home. At the post-program meeting parents received information about their children's general progress, and were made aware of termination issues for children leaving the group after their twelfth and final session.

### **3.3. Summary of Methodological Limitations.**

Specific methodological weaknesses of CODIP research (Pedro-Carroll et al., 1985, 1986, 1989 & 1992) has already been discussed in section 2.1. Additional methodological limitations pertaining to children's post-divorce adjustment are now highlighted through Grych and Fincham's (1992) metanalysis of ninety-five recent research studies conducted in this area. These studies focused on comparisons between 'children of divorce' and children from intact families; and on different therapeutic interventions implemented before 1992 to facilitate and support children's post-divorce adjustment. Grych et al. (1992) described the Children of Divorce Intervention Program (CODIP) as having the most clearly documented program outcomes of all similar programs researched thus far. They felt other program intervention research was "...*impressionistic or limited because the evaluation studies contained serious methodological flaws.*" (p.440).

Grych and Fincham (1992) highlight the following general methodological weaknesses in the studies they analyzed:

- The use of small, non-representative samples.

- A lack of appropriate comparison group(s).
- An inadequate measure of central constructs.
- The frequent assessment of a single source to provide research outcomes on multiple variables (Emery, 1988; Kurdek, 1987.)
- That sources of information had not been independent of each other. For example children's ratings may be affected by their parents' opinions, or teachers' ratings may be influenced by their contact with group leaders of CODIP (Kurdek, 1983).
- Certain measures of parents' and children's post-divorce adjustment have not always been psychometrically sound (Kurdek, 1983).
- Intact family comparison groups have not been distinguished in terms of the amount of inter-parental conflict within these families.
- It is often considered that parent's perspectives reflect those of their children. Several theorists have found differing results in this regard (Kurdek, Blisk & Siesky, 1981 ; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980). Kurdek (1983) felt there was a greater discrepancy between children and parents' perceptions in the initial disequilibrium of the early post-separation phase of the divorce process.

These general methodological weaknesses outlined by Grych et al. (1992) as well as the specific methodological weaknesses of CODIP research outlined in section 2.1 have not been ignored when considering the research design for this study. The research design chosen for this study does not adhere to the suggested methodological rigors outlined above of large representative samples, appropriate comparison groups and good measures of central constructs, but it follows a quasi-experimental approach that assumes the following:

- a) That there are too many moderating factors and mediating processes that impact on children as they progress through the divorce process to be experimentally observed or controlled;
- b) That it is important to move away from research designs that assess post-divorce adjustment in terms of moderating variables like – age, gender, temperament, social cognition etc. – variables that affect the strength or direction of an association between a predictor variable (e.g. divorce) and a response variable (e.g. children's adjustment). There is a need for a research design that focuses on mediating variables that help us understand the *processes* that facilitate these



associations (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Moderating variables help identify 'at risk' groups, whereas mediating variables provide information which help theorists understand the processes that mediate post-divorce intervention programs.

- c) That it is important to not only have a theory-driven research design that facilitates an understanding of how group goals (the facilitation of children's post-divorce adjustment) are achieved through program intervention (program outcomes), but the research design also needs to take into account:
- i. methodological weaknesses of previous studies,
  - ii. a need to understand moderating variables as operating in an interrelated way at contextually inter-systemic levels; and
  - iii. a need to move away from research designs that examine '*structure*' i.e. studies comparing 'children of divorce' and children from intact families, to looking at research designs that understand *mediating processes* that facilitate or hinder children's post-divorce adjustment (Chen & Rossi, 1983).

### 3.4. Research Design Chosen

#### 3.4.1. *Rationale for specific measuring instruments used.*

In the previous section serious conceptual shortcomings and methodological limitations pertaining to children's post-divorce adjustment have been discussed. In previous research certain moderating factors have been considered in isolation, and the research design has been one of cause (parent's divorce) and effect (children's post-divorce adjustment). In reality many moderating variables operate in an interrelated way over a passage of time. The research design chosen in this study has attempted to reflect this reality. In the past certain areas of post-divorce functioning have been focused on to the exclusion of others. For example a preoccupation with parent-child relations and other inter-familial dynamics may be assessed without considering other factors like financial stress, frequent environmental change, or even the effect of the child's temperament in terms of accessing relevant support to facilitate his/her post-divorce adjustment. It becomes apparent that the moderating variables affecting children's post-divorce adjustment and development, and the

consequent mediating processes that facilitate or hinder this adaptation, are numerous. According to Kurdek (1987) there is a need for a research design based on an ecological model that “...characterizes the child’s development as occurring within a set of nested contexts” (p.6). Kurdek (1981) talks of divorce as a:

“...complex, cultural, social, legal, economic and psychological process.”  
(p.856). “Consequently”, he says, “children’s divorce-related experiences need to be understood in terms of hierarchically embedded psychological, familial, social and cultural contexts” (p.856).

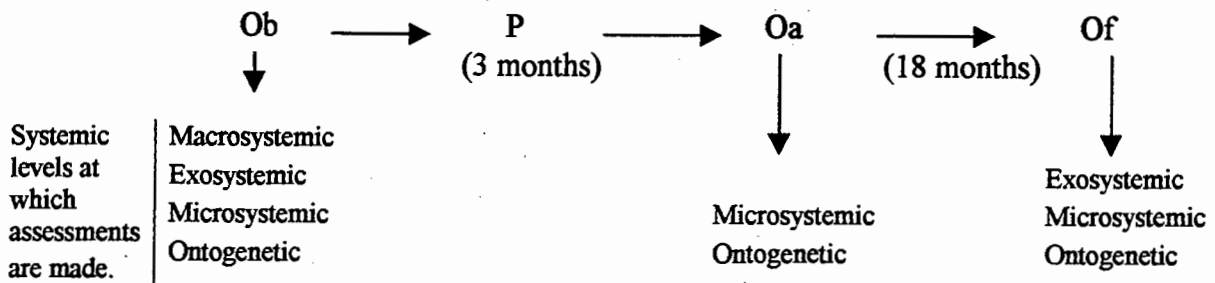
Bronfenbrenner (1979), from an ecosystemic epistemology, describes human development as occurring in developing systems. He labels these systems as the macrosystem, the exosystem, the microsystem, and the ontogenetic systems. Kurdek (1987) adapts these systemic concepts to the divorce situation in the following way:

“With reference to children and divorce the innermost context (the *ontogenetic system*) represents the competencies an individual child possesses for dealing with the stress occasioned by parental separation. The next context (the *microsystem*), which encompasses the first, represents, in addition, factors that affect the child directly such as interparent relations and the child’s own support resources. Finally the third context (the *exosystem*) which encompasses the first two contexts, also represents factors that affect the child indirectly such as the degree of environmental change experienced and the mother’s social support resources” (Kurdek, 1987, p.6).

Kurdek (1981) also describes an outermost context, the *macrosystem*, as the socio-cultural context in which the other three contexts are embedded. It is within this framework, Kurdek’s adaptation of these systemic concepts to children’s post-divorce adjustment, that the present research design has been established. Thus research questionnaires have been specifically chosen in order to gain information specific to some of the variables operating in the macrosystemic, exosystemic and microsystemic contexts in which the children’s ontogenic post-divorce adjustment or development is occurring.

It is acknowledged at the outset that to evaluate the Children of Divorce Intervention Program within an ecosystemic framework is a mammoth task ideally requiring years of assessment and the participation of many professionals from different disciplines. This study presents a limited perspective on what could be done using Kurdek’s

framework from an ecosystemic perspective. The research design of this study is illustrated below:



O = research outcomes; P = program intervention; b = pre-program assessment; a = post-program assessment; f = follow-up assessment.

It is apparent that the research design is experimentally weak in that there are no comparison groups or controls for extraneous variables. Outcomes can also be compromised by repeated measures, history and maturation. The research design does however facilitate an understanding of mediating processes that are operational during program intervention and the fifteen-month follow-up period thereafter, at different contextual systemic levels. It is of note that the macrosystemic context was only assessed at the pre-program measurement to provide a baseline understanding of the socio-cultural context of the children who participated in CODIP.

In this study some of the important moderating variables and mediating processes are assessed within each systemic context in terms of their impact on each child's ontogenetic post-divorce functioning. Table 2 on the following page indicates which questionnaires were used to assess these variables over time – pre-program, post-program and follow-up – within their specific context. Questionnaires assessing children's ontogenetic functioning were rated by the children themselves, their parents, their group leaders, and their teachers. All questionnaires were completed 1 to 4 weeks before the program commenced (pre-program assessment); 1 to 4 weeks after the program was completed (post-program assessment); and 15 months thereafter (follow-up assessment).

Table 2. Summary of measuring instruments used in quantitative research.

<i>Within the macrosystemic context</i>						
<i>Measuring Instrument</i>	<i>Assessed by:</i>	<i>Pre-program</i>	<i>Post-program</i>	<i>15-month Follow-up</i>	<i>Location in Appendix</i>	<i>Pedro-Carroll et al. Research.</i>
Socio-cultural Attitudes towards Divorce Interview Format	parent	19 mothers 8 fathers 3 stepfathers and 3 stepmothers			4	No
<i>Within the exosystemic context</i>						
<i>Measuring Instrument</i>	<i>Assessed by:</i>	<i>Pre-program</i>	<i>Post-program</i>	<i>15-month Follow-up</i>	<i>Location in Appendix</i>	<i>Pedro-Carroll et al. Research.</i>
The Stress/Support Adjustment Scale for Children	child	28 children			7	No
Stress/Support Adjustment Scale for Adults	parent	19 mothers 8 fathers 3 stepfathers 3 stepmothers			6	No
<i>Within the microsystemic context</i>						
<i>Measuring Instrument</i>	<i>Assessed by:</i>	<i>Pre-program</i>	<i>Post-program</i>	<i>15-month Follow-up</i>	<i>Location in Appendix</i>	<i>Pedro-Carroll et al. Research.</i>
The McMaster Family Assessment Device	parent	19 mothers 8 fathers 3 stepfathers 3 stepmothers	16 mothers 10 fathers 3 stepfathers 3 step mothers	14 mothers 6 fathers 2 stepfathers		No
Parenting Contact Questionnaire	parent	19 mothers 8 fathers 3 stepfathers 3 stepmothers	16 mothers 10 fathers 3 stepfathers 3 step mothers	14 mothers 6 fathers 2 stepfathers	1	No
Parent's Access-related Problem Scale	parent	19 mothers 8 fathers 3 stepfathers 3 stepmothers	16 mothers 10 fathers 3 stepfathers 3 step mothers		10	No
What kind of a parenting style does your mom/ dad have?	Parent	19 mothers 8 fathers 3 stepfathers 3 stepmothers	16 mothers 10 fathers 3 stepfathers 3 step mothers		2/3	No
<i>At the ontogenetic level of children's functioning</i>						
<i>Measuring Instrument</i>	<i>Assessed by:</i>	<i>Pre-program</i>	<i>Post-program</i>	<i>15-month Follow-up</i>	<i>Location in Appendix</i>	<i>Pedro-Carroll et al. Research.</i>
Junior Eysenck Personality Inventory	child	28 children	28 children			No
Children's Beliefs about Parental Divorce Scale	child	28 children	28 children	18 children		No
The Child Rating Scale	child	28 children	28 children	18 children		Yes
The Problem Checklist	Child			18 children		Yes
General Demographic Information	Parent	19 mothers 8 fathers 3 stepfathers 3 stepmothers			5	No

<b><i>Ontogenetic level of children's functioning (cont.)</i></b>						
<b><i>Measuring Instrument</i></b>	<b><i>Assessed by:</i></b>	<b><i>Pre-program</i></b>	<b><i>Post-program</i></b>	<b><i>15-month Follow-up</i></b>	<b><i>Location in Appendix</i></b>	<b><i>Pedro-Carroll et. al. research.</i></b>
<b>The Parent Evaluation Form</b>	parent	19 mothers 8 fathers 3 stepfathers 3 stepmothers	16 mothers 10 fathers 3 stepfathers 3 step mothers	14 mothers 6 fathers 2 stepfathers		Yes
<b>The Runters Adjustment Scale</b>	parent	19 mothers 8 fathers 3 stepfathers 3 stepmothers	16 mothers 10 fathers 3 stepfathers 3 step mothers	14 mothers 6 fathers 2 stepfathers		No
<b>The Teacher-Child Rating Scale</b>	teacher	26 teachers	24 teachers			Yes
<b>The Group Leaders Evaluation Form</b>	group leaders	4 group leaders	4 group leaders	4 group leaders		Yes
<b>15-month Follow-up Questionnaire</b>	parents and children			14 mothers 6 fathers 2 stepfathers 18 children	8/9	No

The term '*Pedro-Carroll et al.*' is used to indicate whether these researchers (1985, 1986, 1989 & 1992) used a particular scale/questionnaire.

### ***3.4.2. Overview of each systemic context and the specific measuring instruments used.***

#### ***The macrosystemic context.***

In adapting these systemic concepts to the divorce situation Kurdek (1981) describes the macrosystem as the broadest component of the ecosystemic framework. This context defines the cultural beliefs, values and attitudes that surround family, marriage, parent roles, the status of women, child rearing and the rights of children. It is within the context of these socio-cultural values that 'children of divorce' and their families exist. Assessments made within this context considered whether divorce was seen as a creative alternative to a pathologically functioning marriage, with the potential for positive outcomes, or whether divorce was seen as a socially unacceptable alternative to marriage and the nuclear family. These perceptions either facilitated or impeded the type of support children and their re-structured families were likely to receive from their macrosystemic/socio-cultural context.

Many researchers have noted a change in form and function of the modern family owing to the emergence of the socio-cultural values of individualism, humanism and self-actualization (Eiduson, 1979; Macklin, 1980). Some of the consequences of these changed values have been that social, religious, economic, educational and welfare organizations have replaced many of the family's previous functions. A new socio-cultural accent on the psychological well being of each family member has developed (Davis, 1979; Gadlin, 1980). Sex-role stereotypes have become more androgenous, and there is a predominance of both parents taking on both wage earning and child-nurturing roles that were previously sex-role stereotyped (Gerdes, 1988; Hock, 1980; Hoffman, 1977, 1979; Raschke & Raschke, 1979). Kurdek (1981) mentions there is a new societal perception that divorce facilitates a time of constructive change as compared to an experience of long-lasting trauma; and divorce is seen as a creative alternative to a pathologically functioning family. Divorcees are no longer considered to be disturbed members of society, and there is a new focus on the bi-nuclear family, as opposed to the intact family (Kanoy & Cunningham, 1984). However other sectors of society still consider divorce to be a stigma (Hancock, 1980) and single-parent and reconstituted families to be inferior (Smith, 1980).

As no known attempt has been made to collect data within this context a structured interview format was devised for this purpose, The Socio-Cultural Attitudes Towards Divorce Interview Format (Appendix 4). The researcher acknowledges the limitations of this questionnaire in terms of validated standardized questionnaire procedures. The questionnaire is used to gain thematic descriptive information from the subjective point of view of the children's caretakers. The main aim of this data-collecting focus is to understand how supportive or unsupportive the macrosystemic context is to children's post-divorce adjustment.

### *The exosystemic context.*

The exosystem is defined by broad social factors, which do not directly affect the developing person, but impinge on the setting in which that person is contained. In a divorce situation variables in the exosystem one would consider to be impacting on children's adjustment would be the quality and quantity of environmental changes each child is experiencing; and the amount of social support available directly to the child through educational, extra-familial, recreational, religious, therapeutic and other social support settings.

Also of importance would be exosystemic variables that foster parental support which in turn bolsters their children's adjustment. Children may perceive environmental change differently to their parents, hence the need to collect information from both adults' and children's perspectives (Berg & Kelly, 1979). For example, in a marriage where there has been much ongoing conflict between the marital couple, the former spouse may perceive the loss of the husband's availability to be a positive change, however children may experience the same change as a great loss. Wallerstein and Kelly (1980) reported that children's adjustment seems to be correlated to that of their parents, but this has not been adequately substantiated.

Kurdek (1981), and Kurdek and Berg (1987) emphasize how children's adjustment is greatly influenced by how they perceive their parents' separation/divorce. Wallerstein and Kelly (1980) found that children's adjustment could be hindered by their perception that they have little control over the environmental changes taking place in

their lives. Stolberg (1980) found that frequent environmental changes were related to the following symptoms: children's depression, social withdrawal, aggression and delinquency (as rated by mothers); as well as to children perceiving themselves and their parents as having difficulty in controlling their world.

From an adult perspective both men and women's post-divorce adjustment is positively related to the following environmental factors: few economic difficulties; frequent social interaction with relatives, friends and the community; and the establishment of a new intimate relationship (see Chiriboga, Roberts & Stein, 1977; Pais & White, 1979). Women's post-divorce adjustment is also correlated to a non-traditional sex-role self-concept; and to economic independence from their former spouse (Hetherington, Cox & Cox, 1979; Bloom, White & Asher, 1978).

Chiriboga, Coho, Stein and Roberts (1979) found that although divorce-related stress for adults could be mitigated by turning to friends, counselors, relatives and self-help organizations, that *"...there is no direct evidence that the availability or use of such support systems is beneficial to the children"* (Kurdek, 1981, p.859). Wallerstein and Kelly (1980), and Berg (1979) suggested alternative sources of support for children could be friends, siblings, teachers, classmates, grandparents, cousins, neighbors and parents of good friends. However they found that children seldom used these avenues of support. In addition they found that children who turned to parents for support, made use of other extra-familial resources as well. Those children who did not turn to parents for support, seldom sought help elsewhere. The above theorists concluded that those children who sought help were likely to access a variety of supports, but those children who found it difficult to ask for help felt psychologically stranded.

The Stress/Support Divorce Adjustment Questionnaire for Adults/Children (Appendix 6 & 7) was devised for this study to assess the stresses and supports parents and children participating in this study experienced in their exosystemic context. Once again, as with the Socio-Cultural Attitudes towards Divorce Interview Format, these questionnaires have not been compiled according to validated standardized procedures, but are used to gain descriptive information that is thematically analyzed. It is assumed that if children and their parents have few stresses and adequate support their exosystemic context would be supportive of their post-divorce adjustment.



Aspects of the General Demographic Information Questionnaire (van der Poel, 1983 - Appendix 5 ) were used to illustrate parents' socio-economic status, racial grouping and occupational status.

The interview formats and questionnaires used to assess the macrosystemic and exosystemic contexts of each child were thematically analyzed in Section 4.2.1. and 4.2.2. respectively.

### *The microsystemic context.*

Much research in terms of children's post-divorce adjustment has been conducted within this context. Attention is focused on the interactive processes operating within the family before and after the divorce event. It is important to understand how the overall functioning of the family impacts on the post-divorce adjustment of each family member. Questionnaires within this context focused on the following variables: family functioning, pre- and post-divorce (The McMaster Family Assessment Device); child-parent relationships (What kind of parent are you? /What kind of parenting style do you think your mom or dad has?); the degree of conflict or reasonable negotiation between estranged parents (The Parenting Contact Questionnaire/The Parent's Access-Related Problems Scale); the type of disciplining procedures parents were using (What kind of parent are you?/What kind of parenting style do you think your mom or dad has?); the degree of contact the child has with the non-custodial parent (The Parenting Contact Questionnaire/The Parent's Access-Related Problems Scale); and the effect changed family structures were having on children's post-divorce adjustment and development (The McMaster Family Assessment Device).

General family functioning was assessed using the McMaster Family Assessment Device (FAD) which was revised by Epstein, Baldwin and Bishop (1983). It is a 53-item scale measuring family functioning along seven dimensions: Problem Solving Ability, Communication, Family Roles, Affective Responsiveness between family members, Affective Involvement amongst family members, Behavioral Control, and

General Family Functioning. Responses to questionnaire statements range from '*Strongly Agree*' (1); '*Agree*' (2); '*Disagree*' (3); to '*Strongly Disagree*' (4). Scores describing unhealthy family functioning are transformed by subtracting the score from 5. Scored responses to each item are averaged to provide seven overall sub-scores, which range from 1.00 (healthy) to 4.00 (unhealthy). The reliability of the scale was verified using the responses of 503 subjects, and it was found that the scale had high internal consistency (Epstein et al., 1983). Items within each of the 7 sub-scales were strongly interrelated. Six of the sub-scales, with the exclusion of the seventh sub-scale measuring General Family Functioning, were mutually exclusive. The validity of the scale was verified through a 67% success rate when using the FAD to distinguish between 128 non-clinical families (who were functioning adequately) and 98 clinically referred families.

The FAD was adapted in 1983 by van der Poel to assess family functioning at a time when family structures were changing as a result of parental separation or divorce. This adaptation was used in this research. Theorists agree that it is not necessarily the divorce per se that leads to emotional and behavioral adjustment disorders in adults or children in a post-divorce/separation situation, but it is often the dysfunctional family functioning prior to, or after the divorce event, that can lead to these disorders. With this rationale in mind custodial and non-custodial parents were requested to complete this questionnaire in terms of how they perceived comparative pre-divorce and post-divorce family functioning at pre-program, post-program and follow-up measurements.

R. Rosen, a UCT Doctoral student, compiled the Parenting Contact Questionnaire (PCQ, Appendix 1) in 1977. It is divided into three sections. Section One assesses the amount of contact, and the type of contact a child has with his/her non-custodial parent. Section Two measures the amount of post-divorce/separation contact between estranged parents. Section Three assesses the quality of this co-parental relationship with regard to the ongoing conflict or support parents are experiencing when they interact with each other.

Many theorists (Alexander, 1980; Dominic & Schlesinger, 1980; Friedman, 1980; Greif, 1995; Ihinger-Tallman, Pasley & Buehler, 1993; Stephen, Freedman & Hess,

1993; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980) have extensively addressed the issue of the availability/accessibility of the non-custodial parent. They agree that children's adjustment is best facilitated by the continuity of his/her relationship with their non-custodial parent. The first section addressed this issue. It is divided into sub-sections measuring 'direct contact', 'indirect contact' and the 'type of contact' the child has with his/her non-custodial parent. The rating for each of these sub-sections ranges from '*most frequent*' (4) to '*no contact*' (0). Scores within each sub-section were summated and a percentage obtained. The scores for all three sub-sections were also totaled and an overall percentage obtained for the fourth sub-section that indicated the amount of contact between the non-custodial parent and his/her child. The highest score for each sub-section would be 4; and the lowest would be 0. In sub-section four the highest totaled score would be 12, and the lowest score would be 0.

The other questionnaire used to assess the quality of the relationship between non-custodial parents and their children was the Parent's Access-Related Problems Scale (van der Poel, 1983; Appendix 10). Owing to the scoring structure of the latter scale it was thematically analyzed.

In the second section of the PCQ 'Co-parental Contact' was assessed. There were eight statements that were rated '*Always*' (4); '*Often*' (3), '*Sometimes*' (2), or '*Never*' = (1). Once again these scores were summated, and a percentage obtained. This percentage gave an indication of the amount of interaction between divorced parents with regard to the well being of the children that they continue to co-parent.

Butler, Mellon, Stroh and Stern (1995); Emery (1988), Hetherington, Cox and Cox (1979), Rashcke and Rashcke (1979), Twaite and Luchow (1996) and Wallerstein (1983) agree that children's adjustment is severely affected by ongoing parental conflict. It is this dynamic, the degree of ongoing inter parental conflict or support, that was assessed by the third section of the Parenting Contact Questionnaire. In this section parents answered ten questions. Four of the questions indicated the degree of conflict in the post-divorce co-parental relationship, and six of the questions indicated the degree of support parents were giving to each other in the post-divorce situation. Parents' responses to these 'conflict' and 'support' questions were rated from

'Always' (4), 'Often' (3), 'Sometimes' (2) and 'Never' (1). The responses given by parents were summated and a percentage obtained.

Many parents are faced with having to learn new parenting skills in their post-divorce situation. Hetherington, Cox and Cox (1978) report that the post-divorce parenting style of most maternal custodians tends towards being controlling and restrictive, especially with regard to their sons. However the parenting style of most non-custodial fathers tends towards permissiveness and indulgence. In their research, Baumrind (1971), and Santrock and Warshak (1979), discovered that the parenting style that best facilitated children's post-divorce adjustment was one that offered both empathetic understanding as well as appropriate and consistent limit-setting. They termed this parenting style - 'authoritative parenting'. It was thus considered important to assess the parenting style of custodial and non-custodial parents as an important moderating variable affecting children's post-divorce adjustment. An understanding of parents' parenting styles was gained through parents' assessment of the 'What Kind of Parent Are You?' scale (Sanders & Remsburg, 1986; Appendix 2) and by children's assessment of the 'What Kind of Parenting Style do you think your mom / dad has?' scale (Appendix 3).

The Parenting Style Questionnaires (PSQ) assesses the following parenting styles – 'Demanding', 'Critical', 'Overprotective', 'Inadequate', 'Disengaged' or 'Validating'. Each parenting style section had a different number of statements parents and children rated. Within the 'Demanding' and 'Overprotective' parenting style sections there were nine statements; within the 'Critical' and 'Validating' parenting style sections there were eight statements; and within the 'Inadequate' and 'Disengaged' parenting style sections there were seven statements. To each statement a response was made as to whether the parent communicated in this way – 'Always' (2), 'Sometimes' (1); or 'Never' (0). In each section ratings of the responses were added and a percentage was obtained, giving an indication as to how much a parent perceived themselves to have a particular parenting style, or how much the child perceived that parent to have a particular parenting style. The 'Validating' parenting style was most similar to what Baumrind (1971) and Santrock and Warshack (1979) described as 'authoritative' parenting. This particular type of parenting was characterized by appropriate limit setting and parental control, parental love and affirmation, and by parental

encouragement of children to take responsibility for decision-making and problem solving in appropriate areas of their lives. Theorists felt this type of parenting best facilitated children's development and ability to deal with stress.

*The ontogenetic level of children's functioning.*

At this level the child's actual divorce adjustment and normal developmental functioning was assessed. The moderating variables considered to be important were: the child's age, gender, temperament, social cognition of the divorce event, and the length of time since their parents had been divorced or separated. In addition each child's level of personal adjustment was assessed with regards to the problems they were experiencing and the level of interpersonal competency skills they had developed in order to cope with this life transition.

Information about children's age, gender and length of time their parents had been separated or divorced was found in the General Demographic Information Questionnaire (van der Poel, 1983; Appendix 5). This information is described and assessed within the thematic analysis of the Results chapter (Section 4.2.4.).

Research has shown that children who have difficult temperaments have adjustment problems in their post-divorce situation (Werner, 1992). These difficulties are exacerbated if children are experiencing situations of high stress and low support (Hetherington, 1979). Children's temperaments were assessed using the Junior Eysenck Personality Inventory (Eysenck, 1965) in order to predict whether program outcomes were affected by children's temperamental orientations, and also to assess whether their temperamental orientation changed during program intervention.

The JEPI was initially developed in 1965 by Sybil Eysenck. It was designed to measure the two major personality dimensions of 'Neuroticism' or emotionality, and 'Extraversion/Introversion' in children. It was developed from the Maudsley Personality Inventory (Eysenck, 1959) and the Eysenck Personality Inventory for Adults (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1964). The Eysencks felt that these two major

personality dimensions interrelated in a way that gave rise to specific personality traits or characteristics. Sybil Eysenck explained:

*“...Extraversion is characterized by sociability, activity, optimism, out-going and impulsive behavior etc., while introversion is characterized by unsociable, passive, quiet, thoughtful and reserved behavior. Similarly with respect to neuroticism the unstable person is moody, touchy, anxious, restless, rigid, while the stable person is calm, carefree, easy-going, reliable and so forth” (1965, p.3).*

The test-retest reliability of the scale is between 0.7 and 0.9. The reliability of the JEPI scale is lower for younger children (7-9 years of age), but for children above 10 years of age, reliabilities are higher. The JEPI also contains a ‘Lie’ scale for the detection of faking. Reliability of ‘Lie’ scores is higher for younger children. Validity of the scale has been established in terms of its ability to distinguish between clinical and non-clinical populations, in terms of symptoms of neuroticism/instability and Extraversion/introversion.

This questionnaire was used to assess each child’s specific temperamental orientation in terms of ‘Extraversion’, ‘Introversion’ and ‘Social Desirability’ (‘Lie Scale’) scores. Children with high ‘Extraversion’ and/or high ‘Neuroticism’ scores would be considered to have temperamental difficulties. Research has shown that children with temperamental difficulties struggle to adjust to their parent’s divorce, especially when they are experiencing situations of high stress and low support (Hetherington, 1979). It is thus important to look at the interrelationship between children’s temperaments and the degree of environmental stress they are experiencing. These two moderating variables (temperament and environmental stress/support) operate at two systematically different levels. Children’s temperament functioning at an ontogenetic level, is assessed through the use of the Junior Eysenck Personality Inventory. The amount of environmental stress/support children are experiencing is assessed within an exosystemic context, and is measured by the Stress/Support Adjustment Scale for Children (Appendix 7).

High ‘Neuroticism’ (instability) scores according to Eysenck (1965) depict children who are anxious, who worry, and are who are individual, moody, and frequently

depressed. These scores also depict children who are likely to sleep badly and to suffer from various psychosomatic disorders; children who are overly emotional and who react strongly to all sorts of stimuli; and children who find it difficult to get back on 'an even keel' after each emotionally arousing experience. Children with high 'Neuroticism' scores have intense feelings when having to engage in any life adjustment process, they tend to react in irrational and rigid ways. The central characteristics of a child with a highly neurotic temperamental orientation are that he/she is a '*worrier*' and is constantly preoccupied with the concern that something may go wrong.

When a highly neurotic child also has highly extraverted characteristics ('high Neuroticism/ high Extraversion' scores) such an individual is likely to be touchy, restless, excitable and even aggressive.

In contrast Eysenck describes children with low 'Neuroticism' (stability) scores as having slow and generally weak emotional responses. This is the child that can return to baseline functioning quite quickly after a period of emotional arousal. Eysenck describes these children with low neurotic scores as calm, even-tempered, controlled and unworried (1965, p.9/10).

The JEPI is composed of 60 items that are rated '*No*' (0) or '*Yes*' (1). Each question falls into one of the following categories 'Extraversion' (24 questions), 'Neuroticism / Instability' (24 questions) or 'Lies/ Social Desirability' (12 questions). A scoring index is placed over the responses and each '*Yes*' response is scored as 1. The responses for each subsection were summated and a percentage obtained. The child's temperament was then described in terms of characteristics that typify the following categories: 'High Extraversion/High Neuroticism'; 'High Extraversion/Low Neuroticism'; 'Low Extraversion/High Neuroticism' and 'Low Extraversion/Low Neuroticism'. It was presumed that children who have 'High Extraversion/High Neuroticism' scores would be the children with the most temperamental difficulties, and hence would be the children who would find it most difficult to adjust to their parent's divorce.

In addition 'Lie/Social Desirability' scores give an indication as to how truthful the children had been when making their responses. If the child was trying to please the rater, resulting in less truthful 'Extraversion' and 'Neuroticism' scores, then this would be indicated by high 'Social Desirability' scores.

The Children's Beliefs About Parental Divorce Scale (CBAPS, Kurdek & Berg, 1987) was used to assess children's perceptions and social cognitions of their parents' divorce. In previous research findings (Kurdek & Berg, 1976; Kurdek, 1986) it was indicated that children's post-divorce adjustment is facilitated or hindered by their interpersonal reasoning or social cognition about the divorce event and process. These researchers found that it was important for children's perceptions of the divorce process to lead to an understanding that they still had a locus of control in their divorce situation, and that they were not responsible for their parents' divorces.

The CBAPS is a 36-item scale with 6 sub-scales – 'Peer Ridicule and Avoidance'; 'Paternal Blame'; 'Fear of Abandonment'; 'Maternal Blame'; 'Hope of Reunification' and 'Self-Blame'. There are moderate item-total correlations and Cronbach Alphas within each sub-scale, and a moderate 9-week test-retest reliability. The child responds 'Yes' or 'No' to the 36 statements. Items are keyed for problematic responding. Scores for the 6 sub-scales are derived by summing the number of problematic beliefs within each sub-scale (total possible score = 6). A total score is derived by summing the number of problematic beliefs across all items (total possible score = 60).

The CBAPS was correlated with the following scales - the Trait Anxiety Inventory for Children (Spielberger, 1973), the Children's Perception of Control Measure (Connell, 1985), the Self-Description Questionnaire (Marsh, Relich & Smith, 1983), the Social Support Scale (Gottlieb, 1983), the Social Problem Solving Scale (Weissberg, Gesten, Carnrike, Toro, Rapkin, Davidson & Cowen, 1981), the Child Behaviour Checklist (Achenbach & Edlebrock, 1983), and the Child Behaviour Checklist - Teacher's Report Form (Edlebrock & Achenbach, 1984).

In relation to the concurrent validity of this scale with the aforementioned scales, the following psychometric properties of the CBAPS were recognized. Problematic



CBAPS beliefs were related to children's self-reported maladjustment; anxiety, poor self-concept (especially regarding relations with parents), and to a perception of low social support. Problematic CBAPS beliefs were not significantly related to control beliefs, interpersonal problem solving, or to parents' and teachers' ratings of internalizing and externalizing behavioral problems. Kurdek and Berg (1987) confer with other researchers (Cantrell & Prinz, 1985; Kurdek, 1987; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980) that "...*parents and teachers may not be reliable judges of children's interpersonal thoughts and feelings*", and that children are a better source of information "...*about their own reactions to parental divorce*" (Kurdek & Berg, 1987 p.718). The number of problematic beliefs, i.e. beliefs affecting the child's adjustment, varied by family structure but generally not by age, gender or length of parental separation.

Other self-report rating scales used to assess children's post-divorce ontogenic functioning were the Child Rating Scale (Hightower, Cowen, Spinell, Lotyczewski, Guare, Rohrbeck & Brown, 1987) and the Problem Checklist (Stolberg, Cullen & Garrison 1982). The latter scale is thematically assessed (section 4.2.4.).

The Child Rating Scale (CRS) is a 24-item scale measuring children's perceptions of their school problems and competencies, based on four sub-scales entitled, 'Rule Compliance', 'Anxiety/Withdrawal', 'Social Skills' and 'School Interest'.

- The 'Rule Compliance/Acting Out' sub-scale assesses children's perceptions of their conduct with regard to established school and classroom rules (*"I behave in school, "I don't bother classmates who are working, "I follow school rules" etc.*)
- The 'Anxiety / Withdrawal' sub-section measures children's perceptions of their internal reactions to distress (*"I get scared in school", "I worry about things at school" etc.*)
- The 'Peer Social Skills' sub-section assesses children's perceptions of their interpersonal functioning and confidence in dealing with peers (*"I have many friends", "My classmates tease me". etc.*)

- The 'School Interest' sub-section measures children's perceptions of, and interest in, school related activities (*"I like to do school work", "I like to answer questions in class" etc.*)

The scale was developed with the rationale that:

*"Children's reports of their behaviors, impressions, thoughts, and attitudes can provide rich insights into how they see themselves functioning in different settings or environments. School provides a significant social setting with an important set of parameters in which children must react"* (Hightower, Cowen, Spinell, Lotyczewski, Rohrbeck & Brown, 1987, p.2).

The CRS can be used as a screening tool to assess which children have adjustment problems. It can also be used as a pre-post program assessment tool in order to ascertain the adjustment affects experienced by children who participated in CODIP.

CRS items are divided into six clusters. The first item in each cluster corresponds to the 'Rule Compliance' factor, the second item to the 'Anxiety/Withdrawal' behavior factor; the third item to the measurement of the 'Peer Social Skills' factor; and the fourth item to the 'School Interest' factor. Children rate each item on a 3-point scale from *'usually no'* (1), *'sometimes'* (2), to *'usually yes'* (3) when the appropriate response is a positive one. Where the appropriate response is a negative answer the score is re-keyed by subtracting the normal response value from 4. High scores indicate fewer problems and/or many perceived strengths. Alphas for CRS factor and total scores range from 0,56 to 0,79. Four-week test-retest reliabilities for 2nd and 3rd graders range from 0,46 to 0,75 (Alpert Gillis et al., 1989).

Parent-rated scales of children's post-divorce adjustment included the Parent Evaluation Form (Pedro-Carroll & Cowen, 1985) and the Rutter's Adjustment Scale (Rutter, 1970).

The Parent Evaluation Form (PEF) is a 24-item scale assessing parents' views of their children's feelings, behavior, and problem-solving skills. Parents rate these items on a 4-point scale from *'very true (1)*, to *'not true at all' (4)*. High PEF summed scores

reflected better adjustment in children, as assessed by their parents. The PEF has high face validity, an alpha coefficient of 0,84 and a 2-week test-retest reliability of 0,72.

The Rutters Adjustment Scale is a 31-item scale divided into three sub-sections assessing 'Health Problems' (Psychosomatic symptoms); 'Habits'; and 'Behavioral or Emotional Disorders/Maladjustments'. The scale distinguishes between children who are showing signs of maladjustment (neurotic and anti-social behavior) and children who are not.

Parents' scoring responses for 'Health- related/(psychosomatic)' problems ranged from '*never in the last year*' (0) to '*at least once a week*' (3). Parents rated children's 'Habits' as occurring along the following dimensions: '*no*' (0), '*mildly*' (1) and '*yes*' (2). In the final sub-section, 'Behavioral Maladjustment' items were rated by parents as '*doesn't apply*' (0), '*applies somewhat*' (1) and '*certainly applies*' (2).

The Scale has a test-retest reliability of  $r = 0,74$ , and an inter-rater reliability of  $r = 0,64$ . The limitation of the scale is that children's behavior is rated by the parent, and not by teachers, peers or siblings.

Teachers' assessed children in their classes who were participating in CODIP using the Teacher-Child Rating Scale (T-CRS; Hightower, Work, Cowen, Lotyczewski, Spinell, Guare & Rohrbeck, 1986). T-CRS is a parsimonious condensation of the 41-item Classroom Adjustment Rating Scale (CARS) (Lorion, Cowen & Caldwell, 1975; and the 54-item Health Resources Inventory (Gesten, 1976). It is a two-part, 35-item measure, rated by teachers. The scale has seven, 5-item sub-scales. Part One assesses the severity of children's problem behaviors within the classroom - 'Acting Out', 'Shy/Anxious', and 'Learning Problems'. It is scored on a 5-point severity scale (1= '*not a problem*' to 5 = '*very serious problem*'). A sum and factor problem score is derived from T-CRS ratings. The sub-scales in Part One are defined below:

- 'Acting Out' behavior assesses children's aggressiveness, disruptiveness and impulsivity ("*Disruptive in class*", "*Overly aggressive to peers*" etc).

- 'Shy/Anxious' behavior measures children's shy, withdrawn, dependent behaviors (*"Shy, timid", "Anxious, worried", "unhappy, sad"* etc.).
- The 'Learning problems' factor assesses how problematic children's skills were with regard to their need to succeed in the school environment (*"Poor work habits", "Difficulty following directions", "Poorly motivated to achieve"* etc.).

Part Two gives an indication of children's competencies. This section consists of four, five-item factored competence dimensions – 'Frustration Tolerance', 'Assertiveness', 'Peer Social Skills', and 'Task Orientation'. Teachers rate each item in terms of how well it describes a child on a 5-point scale from *'not at all' (1)*, to *'very well' (5)*. The sub-scales in Part Two are defined below:

- The 'Frustration Tolerance' factor assesses children's skills with regard to their ability to tolerate and adapt to limits imposed by the school environment (*"Accepts imposed limits"* etc.).
- The 'Assertive Social Skills' factor measures children's interpersonal functioning and confidence in dealing with peers (*"Defends own views under group pressure"* etc. ).
- The 'Task Orientation' factor assesses children's functional effectiveness within the educational setting (*"Completes work"* etc.).
- The 'Peer Social Skills' factor measures children's popularity amongst their peers (*"Has many friends"* etc.).

The highest rating by teachers for children's 'problematic behavior' in their classroom would be 30, and the lowest rating would be 6. A post-program decrease in scores would indicate less problematic behavior in the classroom. The highest 'competency' rating a teacher could attribute to a child in his/her classroom would be 25, and the lowest rating would be 5. A post-program increase in 'competency' scores would indicate a higher level of competency skills acquired. Hence, low Part One and high Part Two factor and total scores indicated better adjustment.

For second and third graders T-CRS scales have a medial alpha of 0,91, and 20-week stability coefficients ranging from 0,61 to 0,88. The scale also has high concurrent validity with the following standardized tests - the Metropolitan Achievement Test (Prescott, Balow, Hogan & Farr, 1978), the State -Trait Anxiety Inventory for Children (Spielberger, 1973), the Parent Evaluation Form (Pedro-Carroll & Cowen, 1985), and the Teacher's Self-Control Rating Scale (Humphrey, 1982). According to Hightower et al.(1986):

*"Data testifying to the T-CRS psychometric integrity lends support to the measure's credibility and highlight its potential applications, including: screening, assessment, program evaluation and research" (p.407).*

Group leaders' assessed the same CODIP participants of this study using The Group Leaders Evaluation Form (GLEF; Pedro-Carroll & Cowen, 1985). The GLEF is a 20-item scale that was used to assess children's perceptions of divorce, their ability to deal with feelings, their interpersonal functioning, and their problem-solving skills. It was divided into two, 10-itemed sub-scales. Part One assessed 'emotional and behavioral problems' children of divorced parents were experiencing, and Part Two measured children's 'competency skills'. Each item was rated on a 4-point scale from 'Very True' (1), to "Not True At All" (4). High Part One sum scores indicated fewer problems, low Part Two sum scores indicated greater levels of competence. Hence *high* scores in Part One and *low* scores in Part Two indicated better adjustment. The GLEF has a 2-week test-retest reliability of 0,92 and an alpha of 0,92.

The analysis of results obtained over time using these measuring instruments is discussed in chapter four.

## Chapter Four

### *Results*

The research results reflect an ecosystemic perspective and are extensive. Not only were nineteen different questionnaires used as assessment tools, but some of them were completed at three different periods of time – pre-program, post-program and at a follow-up time measurement. To assist the reader through the detailed results that are quantitatively and thematically analyzed, the results are presented in the following format for each questionnaire:

- i. Individual analytical procedures for each assessment tool are outlined.
- ii. The summarized research results for each particular analysis are presented in a table.
- iii. The summarized results are discussed.
- iv. Thereafter statistically significant findings for each separate analysis are illustrated.

The reader can read through sections (i) to (iv) and have an overall understanding of the measuring instrument used, the results attained, and their implication for the research at hand. This can be understood without having to spend time reading research results in detail. The significant research results presented in section (iv) enable the reader to:

- check the validity of the research results and the statistical analysis used to attain these results;
- compare them to other research results of a similar nature; and
- re-work these results.

All analyses conducted seek to answer the following three research questions:

1. Did a change occur in the children's post-divorce adjustment while they were participating in the Children of Divorce Intervention Program? This can be indicated if there was a statistically significant difference between pre-program (mean 1) and post-program (mean 2) measurements. Pre-program and post-program measurements are repeated measures on the same questionnaires over a period of three or four months. As with all repeated measures analyses one would need to interpret statistically significant differences with caution. In the time

between measurements, extraneous variables could have impacted on children's post-divorce adjustment, to cause an effect apart from that of program intervention, and thus confounded the researcher's results. Extraneous variables affecting children's adjustment during the three months of program intervention may be numerous. They may impact on all the children as in the case of maturation, history, or as a result of the repeated testing itself (Campbell, 1988). An example of a 'maturation' variable may be the post-divorce adjustment that occurs naturally over the time trajectory of the divorce process. An example of a 'historical' variable affecting children's post-program adjustment could be improved family functioning as a result of parents participating in a 'Support Group' or a 'Parenting Skills Group'. The fact that children, parents, teachers and group leaders repeatedly rate the same questionnaires at different time measurements may lead to a familiarity and/or a reactive response to the questionnaires they are rating. The very questions they are answering may indicate the direction in which change is desired. So on subsequent ratings of the same questionnaire their scores may improve in the perceived required direction. Other extraneous variables may impact on individual children in a unique way, for example a change in home or school, a change in family structure because one parent remarries, or an improved relationship with a non-custodial parent.

2. *Does the post-divorce adjustment of children who have participated in the Children of Divorce Intervention Program change in the fifteen months after program intervention?* This would be indicated if there were statistically significant differences between post-program (mean 2) and follow-up (mean 3) measurements. These repeated measures should be interpreted with even more caution than differences between pre-program and post-program results because there is a fifteen month time difference between measurements and the possibility of extraneous variables confounding results is even greater. Nevertheless, if statistically significant differences are indicated between post-program and follow-up measurements it is hoped that they indicate that the skills taught, and the adjustments made, during program intervention are being sustained and continue to facilitate children's adjustment after program intervention is completed.

3. *Does a change occur in children's adjustment between pre-program and follow-up measurements?* This may be indicated if there are no statistically significant differences between pre-program and post-program measurements, or between post-program and follow-up measurements, but there are statistically significant differences between pre-program (mean 1) and follow-up (mean 3) measurements. Changes between pre-program and post-program measurements, or between post-program and follow-up measurements may be so small that by themselves they are not statistically significant, but taken together over a period of eighteen months they have a cumulative affect that is statistically significant. Interpretations of results over this time period need to take into consideration that many research findings indicate that despite program intervention or the interference of any other extraneous variables children's adjustment improves over the time trajectory of the divorce process. Many theorists indicate that children's adjustment is facilitated by time regardless of the different circumstances of the divorce process they are a part of (Bray & Hetherington, 1993; Hetherington, Cox & Cox, 1985, 1979; Wallerstein, 1987). Theorists indicate that two years after the initial divorce/separation event, or two years after a change in the child's family structure, children begin to adjust to their changed circumstances. The interpretation of this third analysis has the least internal validity because of the possibility for extraneous variables to confound the repeated measures results, which span an eighteen-month time period.

As with all repeated statistical analyses there is a risk of an increased Type I error rate. For each individual statistical analysis, where the established level of significance ( $\alpha$ ) is 0.05, there is a 5% chance of making a Type I error that a result is statistically significant when it is not. With each additional analysis on the same data set the risk of making at least one Type I error increases. There are several ways in which statisticians try to control for the risk of making a Type I error:

- i) through the use of a multiple analysis of variance as the statistical tool of analysis,
- ii) by using a stricter level of significance ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ),
- iii) or through applying the Bonferroni test to data that is to be analyzed.



Although the use of a MANOVA attempts to control for a Type I error rate, some authors insist that it tests a meaningless null hypothesis (Rosenthal & Rosnouw, 1989). This analysis attempts to determine whether there are any statistically significant differences anywhere in the comprehensive data set. Although there is only one analysis conducted and hence very little chance of making a Type I error, there is no substantial indication as to where these statistically significant differences are occurring. The use of a MANOVA is only a useful way of controlling for a Type I error rate when the null hypothesis is true, i.e. there are no statistically significant differences in the data set, and hence there is no need for any further analyses to be conducted. If the use of a MANOVA indicates there are statistically significant differences within the data set, then further statistical analyses need to be conducted in order to ascertain where these differences are occurring. Consequently repeated analyses of variance need to be conducted on the same data set in order to give a meaningful interpretation to results. Once again the possibility of making a Type I error is increased.

Other ways in which statisticians have attempted to control for the Type I error rate are to introduce a stricter level of significance, for example  $\alpha = 0.01$ ; or to apply the Bonferroni test by dividing the level of significance chosen by the number of statistical tests conducted on a data set (Howell, 1995, p.310). An example of how the Bonferroni test would be applied follows: if the same data set is analyzed 100 times, one would divide the chosen level of significance by 100 ( $\alpha = 0.05/100$ ). The result would be a level of significance of 0.0005. In other words, only results with significance values  $\leq 0.0005$  would have statistical significance. The application of the Bonferroni test in this way however greatly increases the risk of making a Type II error. As yet there is no satisfactory solution to this problem.

In an attempt to minimize the Type I error rate in this study exact probability values are reported and a strict level of significance ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ) is taken more seriously. However, interpretations of results that attain a less conservative level of significance ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) are not excluded. Lipsey (1990) indicates that in treatment effectiveness research it is often desirable to keep the likelihood of a Type II error rate low, even at

the expense of accepting an increased probability of making a Type I error. His reasoning is that:

*“In a context where effective treatment is needed and not readily available, a Type II error can represent a great practical loss – an effective treatment is falsely discredited” (p.39).*

Hence in terms of research rigor, results in this study that have levels of significance,  $\alpha = 0.01$ , are given greater weighting, and results that have levels of significance,  $\alpha = 0.05$ , are given less weight, but are regarded as having some importance.

Similar research questions are asked for all the analyses to follow, and the precautions as already outlined for repeated measures analyses, need to be taken into account when interpreting results. In other words, interpretations of results need to consider the confounding of results due to extraneous variables and the possibility of an increased Type I error rate when repeated analyses are conducted on the same data set.

When tables are reported, data is included only for those parents, children, teachers or group leaders that *completed* questionnaires. No statistical methods were used to account for missing data. Means, but not standard deviations are reported in tables. Where results are statistically significant, degrees of freedom are included in the more detailed display of research results and analytical procedures.

A summary of the measuring instruments follows on the next page. The data from measuring instruments are either quantitatively or thematically analyzed. Within these two broad analytical themes, measuring instruments are categorized in terms of their appropriateness to a particular aspect of the ecosystemic context in which the child functions.

#### **4.1. Quantitative Statistical Analysis:**

##### **4.1.1. Within a Microsystemic context:**

1. The McMaster Family Assessment Device
2. The Parenting Contact Questionnaire
3. 3. What Kind of a Parent Are You?
4. What Kind of a Parenting Style do you think Your Mom / Dad Has?

##### **4.1.2. At the Ontogenetic level of the children's functioning:**

5. The Junior Eysenck Personality Inventory
6. The Child Rating Scale
7. Children's Belief about Parental Divorce Scale
8. The Parent Evaluation Form
9. The Rutter's Adjustment Scale
10. The Teacher-Child Rating Scale
11. The Group leaders Evaluation Form

#### **4.2. Thematic Analysis:**

##### **4.2.1. Within a Macrosystemic context:**

12. The Socio-Cultural Attitudes towards Divorce Interview Format

##### **4.2.2. Within an Ecosystemic context:**

13. General Demographic Information - specifically socio-economic status, occupational status and racial affiliation
14. The Stress/Support Divorce Adjustment Questionnaire for Adults
15. The Stress/Support Divorce Adjustment Questionnaire for Children
16. 15-month Follow-up Questionnaire for Adults
17. 15-month Follow-up Questionnaire for Children

##### **4.2.3. Within a Microsystemic context:**

13. General Demographic Information - specifically marital history, family structure and access arrangements
18. Parent's Access-Related Problem Scale

##### **4.2.4. At the Ontogenetic level of the children's functioning:**

13. General Demographic Information - specifically age, gender, length of time since parent's separation/divorce
19. The Problem Checklist

## **Results of Quantitative Analyses**

### ***4.1.1. Within the Microsystemic Context***

### **The McMaster Family Assessment Device (FAD)**

This scale was used to assess pre- and post-divorce family functioning and its impact on children's post-divorce adjustment. The FAD was completed by 19 mothers, 8 fathers, 3 stepfathers and 3 stepmothers at the pre-program measurement; by 16 mothers, 10 fathers, 3 stepfathers and 3 stepmothers at the post-program measurement; and by 14 mothers, 6 fathers and 2 stepfathers at the follow-up measurement.

Two separate analyses were conducted on FAD ratings. Both analyses used a two-way repeated measures ANOVA, with 'time' (pre-program/post-program/follow-up) as the within subjects factor, and 'parent' (mother/father assessments) as the between subjects factor. No other description of the measuring instrument will be given, and results for both analyses will be presented in the designated sections (i) to (iv) layout, as outlined at the beginning of the chapter (p.68).

#### **i) First statistical analysis used to assess FAD results.**

In the first analysis a two-way repeated measures ANOVA, with 'time' (pre-program/post-program/follow-up) as the within subjects factor, and 'parent' (mother/father assessments) as the between subjects factor, was used as the statistical tool of analysis. Mothers' and fathers' pre-/post-divorce assessments of family functioning in each FAD sub-section were compared over pre-program, post-program and follow-up measurements. The research questions asked were similar to those outlined at the beginning of the chapter (pp.68/69), but with a slightly different focus. The research questions asked were: does *family functioning*, as compared to children's adjustment, change during program intervention, during the fifteen month follow-up period thereafter, or during the combined time period that includes both program intervention and the fifteen-month follow-up period?

The results of these analyses are summarized in Table 3 and Table 4 on the following page.

ii) Summary of FAD results for first statistical analysis.

**Table 3.** Summary of two-way repeated measures ANOVA results for mothers' and fathers' assessments of all sub-sections of the McMaster Family Assessment Device over time – at pre-program, post-program and follow-up measurements.

Sub-sections of FAD		df	F	p
<b>Problem Solving</b>	Parent (S) – mother/father	1, 14	0.17	0.68
	Time (T) – prp/pop/fup	2, 28	6.81	0.004**
	Interaction – S x T	2, 28	1.11	0.34
<b>Communication</b>	Parent (S) – mother/father	1, 13	0.23	0.64
	Time (T) – prp/pop/fup	2, 26	0.69	0.51
	Interaction – S x T	2, 26	0.63	0.54
<b>Role Functioning</b>	Parent (S) – mother/father	1, 14	2.13	0.17
	Time (T) – prp/pop/fup	2, 28	7.81	0.002**
	Interaction – S x T	2, 28	0.93	0.41
<b>Affective Responsiveness</b>	Parent (S) – mother/father	1, 14	0.02	0.9
	Time (T) – prp/pop/fup	2, 28	14.28	0.005**
	Interaction – S x T	2, 28	1.93	0.16
<b>Affective Involvement</b>	Parent (S) – mother/father	1, 13	0.02	0.89
	Time (T) – prp/pop/fup	2, 26	8.16	0.002**
	Interaction – S x T	2, 26	4.93	0.02*
<b>Behavioral Control</b>	Parent (S) – mother/father	1, 14	0.08	0.77
	Time (T) – prp/pop/fup	2, 28	4.43	0.02**
	Interaction – S x T	2, 28	1.69	0.2
<b>General Family Functioning</b>	Parent (S) – mother/father	1, 14	0.05	0.83
	Time (T) – prp/pop/fup	2, 28	9.89	0.000005**
	Interaction – S x T	2, 28	1.88	0.17

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ ) Time (T) – prp/pop/fup = pre-program/post-program/follow-up measurements.

**Table 4.** Means for two-way repeated measures ANOVA analyses of mothers' and fathers' assessments of all FAD sub-sections over time.

Sub-sections of FAD	Assessment over time	Pre-program	Post-program	Follow-up
<b>Problem Solving</b>	Mothers' assessments	15.36	16.90	17.36
	Fathers' assessments	13.4	17.4	17.8
<b>Communication</b>	Mothers' assessments	19.1	19.7	20.0
	Fathers' assessments	19.4	18.2	19.8
<b>Role Functioning</b>	Mothers' assessments	23.0	24.64	26.55
	Fathers' assessments	19.2	24.0	24.6
<b>Affective Responsiveness</b>	Mothers' assessments	14.82	17.36	17.09
	Fathers' assessments	13.2	18.4	18.4
<b>Affective Involvement</b>	Mothers' assessments	18.8	20.0	19.5
	Fathers' assessments	18.0	23.0	16.8
<b>Behavioral Control</b>	Mothers' assessments	25.73	27.82	28.72
	Fathers' assessments	24.6	30.0	26.0
<b>General Family Functioning</b>	Mothers' assessments	30.64	34.36	32.9
	Fathers' assessments	26.8	36.0	33.4

The above summarized results are now discussed.

### iii) Discussion of summarized results of FAD analysis 1.

It can be seen from the summarized results in Table 3 that mothers and fathers assessed there had been a statistically significant 'time' effect for the following FAD sub-sections: Problem Solving, Role Functioning, Affective Responsiveness, Affective Involvement and General Family Functioning at  $\alpha = 0.01$ , and for Behavioral Control at  $\alpha = 0.05$ . The only area of family functioning in which there had been no significant change over the different time measurements – pre-program, post-program or follow-up – was for Communication. There was only one area of family functioning in which there had been an interactive effect and that was for Affective Involvement at  $\alpha = 0.05$ .

Detailed section (iv) results to follow indicated where these differences occurred over time for mothers' assessments, fathers' assessments.

The areas of family functioning in which mothers and fathers indicated similar assessments were for Role Functioning, Affective Responsiveness and General Family Functioning. They assessed Role Functioning to have improved significantly over the cumulative time period that included program intervention and the fifteen months thereafter at  $\alpha = 0.05$  for mothers' assessments, and at  $\alpha = 0.01$  for fathers' assessments. Mothers and fathers assessed Affective Responsiveness ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ) and General Family Functioning (at  $\alpha = 0.05$  for mothers' assessments, and at  $\alpha = 0.01$  for fathers' assessments) to have improved during program intervention.

Mothers assessed that there had been a statistically significant difference over the same cumulative time period for Affective Responsiveness ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). Mothers also assessed family functioning to have improved significantly during program intervention in the areas of Affective Responsiveness ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ) and General Family Functioning ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ).

Fathers assessed there to have been a statistically significant improvement in family functioning over the cumulative time period of program intervention and the fifteen months thereafter not only with Role Functioning, but also in the areas of Problem Solving, Affective Involvement and General Family Functioning at  $\alpha = 0.01$ . Fathers

assessed problem solving, affective responsiveness, affective involvement and overall family functioning to have improved during program intervention at  $\alpha = 0.01$ , and role functioning and behavioral control to have improved during the same time period at  $\alpha = 0.05$ .

There was an interactive effect ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) for mothers' and fathers' assessments of Affective Involvement. Mothers assessed there to be no statistically significant changes in this area of family functioning, although they indicated a trend that Affective Involvement improved during program intervention and then 'leveled-off' thereafter. Fathers however perceived this area of family functioning to have improved significantly during program intervention, and then fathers experienced a statistically significant decline in Affective Involvement in the fifteen-month follow-up period. There was a similar trend for fathers' assessments of behavioral control in the family, but the decline in Behavioral Control during the follow-up period was not statistically significant. There is an indication that in these latter areas of family functioning, according to fathers' assessments, program intervention is an important therapeutic support that when applied facilitates well being and family functioning efficacy. When this form of support is no longer available it appears that family functioning in these areas once again declines.

Detailed section (iv) results now follow for statistically significant findings. These results are displayed in the following format: initially there is a two-way repeated measures ANOVA results table, followed by a second table of LSD post hoc test results, and finally a graphical display of means indicating changes in FAD sub-sections over time.



## iv) Detailed FAD results for analysis 1.

Illustrated below are mothers' and fathers' post-divorce assessments of Problem Solving in the family over time – at pre-program, post-program and follow-up measurements.

**Table 5.** Two-way repeated measures results of mothers' and fathers' assessments of Problem Solving in the family over time.

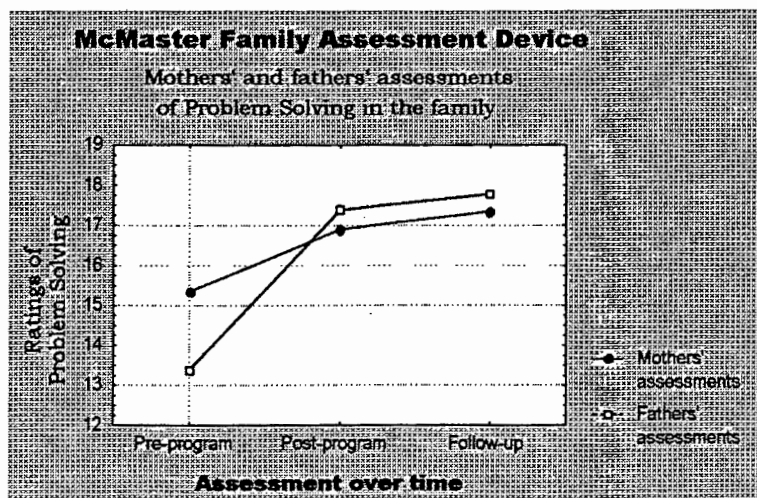
df Effect	MS Effect	df Error	MS Error	F	p-level
Parent (P) – mother/father	1.23	14	7.04	.17	.68
Time (T)	41.5	28	6.09	6.81	.004**
Interaction – P x T	6.75	28	6.09	1.11	.34

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ ) Time = pre-program/post-program/follow-up measurements

**Table 6.** LSD post-hoc test results for mothers' and fathers' assessments of Problem Solving in the family over time.

		<i>Mothers' assessments</i>			<i>Fathers' assessments</i>		
		Pre-program	Post-program	Follow-up	Pre-program	Post-program	Follow-up
<b>Means</b>		15.36	16.91	17.36	13.4	17.4	17.8
<b>Mothers' assessments</b>	Prp		.15	.07	.15	.14	.078
	Pop	.15		.67	.01**	.72	.51
	Fup	.07	.67		.006**	.98	.75
<b>Fathers' assessments</b>	Prp	.15	.01**	.006**		.02*	.009**
	Pop	.14	.72	.98	.02*		.8
	Fup	.08	.51	.76	.009**	.8	

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ ) Prp = pre-program; Pop = post-program; Fup = follow-up



**Figure 2.** Means indicating mothers' and fathers' post-divorce assessments of Problem Solving functioning in the family over time.

Results indicated that there was a statistically significant 'time' effect with regard to how mothers and fathers perceived Problem Solving functioning over time. LSD post hoc test results indicated that only fathers' assessments were statistically significant between means 1 (pre-program) and 2 (post-program), and between means 1 (pre-program) and 3 (follow-up). It appears that fathers assessed problem solving in the family to have improved during program intervention ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ), and during the cumulative time period that included both program intervention and the fifteen months thereafter ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ).

Illustrated below are mothers’ and fathers’ post-divorce assessments of Role Functioning in the family over time.

Table 7. Two-way repeated measures ANOVA results of mothers’ and fathers’ assessments of Role Functioning in the family over time.

df	MS	df	MS		
Effect	Effect	Error	Error	F	p-level
Parent (P) – mother/father	46.67	14	21.92	2.13	.17
Time (T)	73.19	28	9.37	7.81	.002**
Interaction – P x T	8.69	28	9.37	.93	.41

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ ) Time = pre-program/post-program/follow-up measurements

Table 8. LSD post hoc test results of mothers’ and fathers’ assessments of Role Functioning in the family.

		Mothers’ assessments			Fathers’ assessments		
		Pre-program	Post-program	Follow-up	Pre-program	Post-program	Follow-up
		23.0	24.6	26.55	19.2	24.0	24.6
Mothers’ assessments	Pre-		.22	.01**	.03*	.55	.34
	Post-	.22		.15	.002**	.70	.98
	Follow	.01**	.15		.0001**	.134	.249
Fathers’ assessments	Pre-	.03*	.003**	.0001**		.02*	.009**
	Post-	.55	.7	.13	.02*		.76
	Follow	.34	.98	.25	.009**	.76	

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ ) Prp = pre-program; Pop = post-program; Fup = follow-up

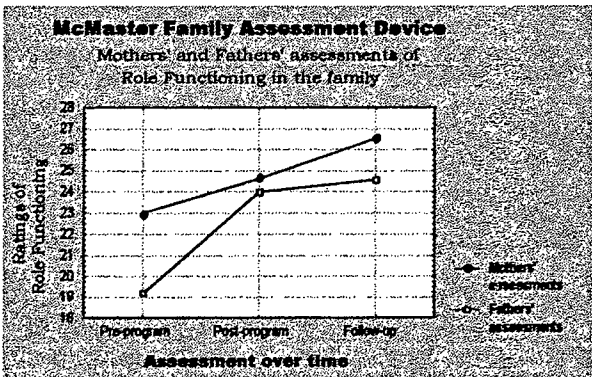


Figure 3. Means of mothers’ and fathers’ assessments of Role Functioning over time.

Results indicated that there was a main ‘time’ effect for mothers’ and fathers’ assessment of Role Functioning in the family at  $\alpha = 0.01$ . LSD post hoc test results indicated that these differences occurred between means 1 (pre-program) and 3 (follow-up) for mothers’ and fathers’ assessments; and between means 1 (pre-program) and 2 (post-program) for fathers’ assessments only. Fathers felt that role functioning in the family had improved during program intervention ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), and both mothers and fathers assessed role functioning to have improved during the cumulative time period that included program intervention and the fifteen months thereafter ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ).

Illustrated below are mothers' and fathers' post-divorce assessments of Affective Responsiveness in the family over time.

**Table 9.** Two-way repeated measures ANOVA results of mothers' and fathers' assessments of Affective Responsiveness in the family over time.

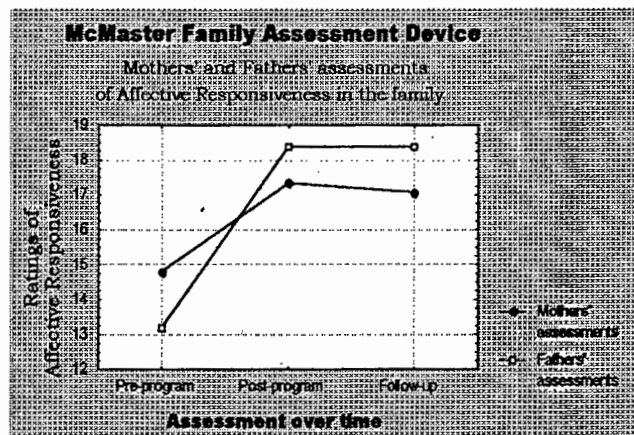
df Effect	MS Effect	df Error	MS Error	F	p-level
Parent (P) – mother/father	.61	14	33.72	.02	.9
Time (T)	66.41	28	4.65	14.28	.00005**
Interaction – P x T	8.99	28	4.65	1.93	.16

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ ) Time = pre-program/post-program/follow-up measurements

**Table 10.** LSD post hoc test results of mothers' and fathers' assessments of Affective Responsiveness in the family over time.

		Mothers' assessments			Fathers' assessments		
		Pre-program	Post-program	Follow-up	Pre-program	Post-program	Follow-up
Means		14.82	17.36	17.1	13.2	18.4	18.4
Mothers' assessments	Pre-		.01**	.02*	.18	.005**	.005**
	Post-	.01**		.77	.001**	.38	.38
	Fup	.02*	.77		.002**	.27	.27
Fathers' assessments	Pre-	.18	.001**	.002**		.0007**	.0007**
	Post-	.005**	.38	.27	.0007**		1.0
	Fup	.005**	.38	.27	.0007**	1.0	

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ ) Prp = pre-program; Pop = post-program; Fup = follow-up



**Figure 4.** Means of mothers' and fathers' assessments of Affective Responsiveness in the family over time.

Results indicated that there was a statistically significant 'time' effect for mothers' and fathers' assessments of Affective Responsiveness in the family over time ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ). LSD post hoc test results indicated that these differences occurred between means 1 (pre-program) and 2 (post-program), and between means 1 (pre-program) and 3 (follow-up) for both mothers' and fathers' assessments. Mothers and fathers experienced affective responsiveness in their family units to have improved during program intervention (at  $\alpha = 0.05$  for mothers, and at  $\alpha = 0.01$  for fathers), and during the cumulative time period that included program intervention and the fifteen months thereafter ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ).

Illustrated below are mothers' and fathers' post-divorce assessments of Affective Involvement in the family over time.

**Table 11.** Two-way repeated measures ANOVA results of mothers' and fathers' assessments of Affective Involvement in the family over time.

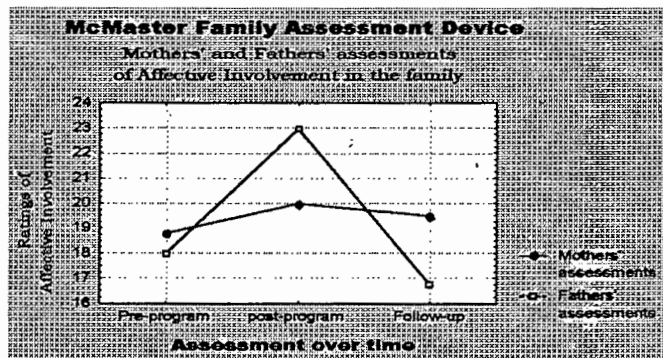
df	MS	df	MS		
Effect	Effect	Error	Error	F	p-level
Parent (P) – mother/father	.278	13	15.15	.02	.89
Time (T)	46.43	26	5.69	8.16	.002**
Interaction – P x T	28.08	26	5.69	4.93	.02*

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ ) Time = pre-program/post-program/follow-up measurements

**Table 12.** LSD post hoc test results of mothers' and fathers' assessments of Affective Involvement in the family over time.

		Mothers' assessments			Fathers' assessments		
		Pre-program	Post-program	Follow-up	Pre-program	Post-program	Follow-up
Means		18.8	20.0	19.5	18.0	23.0	16.8
Mothers' assessments	Pre-		.27	.52	.55	.003**	.138
	Pop	.27		.64	.14	.03*	.02*
	Foll	.52	.64		.26	.01**	.05*
Fathers' assessments	Pre-	.55	.14	.26		.003**	.43
	Pop	.003**	.03*	.01**	.003**		.0003**
	Foll	.14	.02*	.05*	.43	.0003**	

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ ) Prp = pre-program; Pop = post-program; Fup = follow-up



**Figure 5.** Means of mothers' and fathers' assessments of Affective Involvement in the family over time.

Results indicated that there was a statistically significant 'time' and interactive effect for mothers' and fathers' assessments of Affective Involvement in the family over time. LSD post hoc test results indicated that these differences occurred between means 1 (pre-program) and 2 (post-program), and between means 2 (post-program) and 3 (follow-up) for fathers' assessments. It appears that fathers experienced affective involvement within the family to improve significantly during program intervention ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ), and then to decrease significantly in the fifteen months thereafter ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ). There is a disordinal interaction effect between post-program and follow-up measurements where mothers perceived affective involvement in the family to be continuing at a similar level of efficacy, whereas fathers perceived affective involvement in the family to be deteriorating.

Illustrated below are mothers' and fathers' post-divorce assessments of Behavioral Control in the family over time.

**Table 13.** Two-way repeated measures ANOVA results of mothers' and fathers' assessments of Behavioral Control in the family over time.

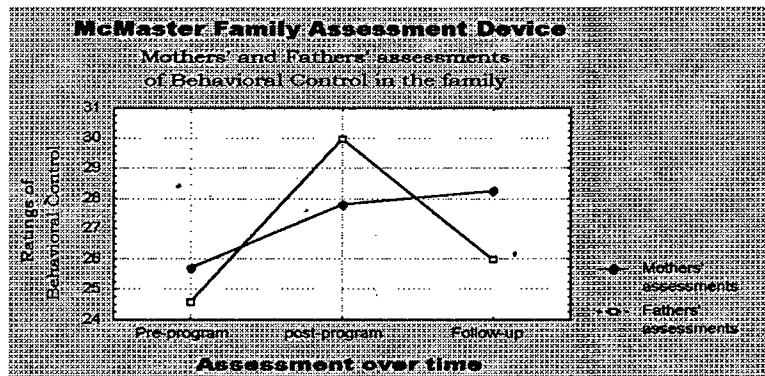
df Effect	MS Effect	df Error	MS Error	F	p-level
Parent (P) – mother/father	1.70	14	20.0	.08	.77
Time (T)	48.27	28	10.9	4.43	.02*
Interaction – P x T	18.4	28	10.9	1.69	.20

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ ) Time = pre-program/post-program/follow-up measurements

**Table 14.** LSD post hoc test results of mothers' and fathers' assessments of Behavioral Control in the family over time.

Means		Mothers' assessments			Fathers' assessments		
		Pre-program	Post-program	Follow-up	Pre-program	Post-program	Follow-up
		25.73	27.82	28.27	24.6	30.0	26.0
Mothers' assessments	Prp		.15	.08	.53	.02*	.88
	Pop	.15		.75	.08	.23	.32
	Fup	.08	.75		.05*	.34	.21
Fathers' assessments	Prp	.53	.08	.05*		.02*	.51
	Pop	.02*	.23	.34	.02*		.07
	Fup	.88	.32	.21	.51	.07	

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ ) Prp = pre-program; Pop = post-program; Fup = follow-up



**Figure 6.** Means of mothers' and fathers' assessments of Behavioral Control in the family over time.

Results indicated that there was a statistically significant 'time' effect for mothers' and fathers' assessments of Behavioral Control in the family ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). LSD post hoc test results indicated that there was a difference between means 1 (pre-program) and 2 (post-program) for fathers' assessments. Fathers felt that behavioral control had improved significantly during program intervention ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). The graphical display indicates that there was a similar interactive trend, and a similar decline in behavioral control as was evidenced in fathers' assessments of Affective Involvement in the family, but this trend was not statistically significant.

Illustrated below are mothers' and fathers' post-divorce assessments of General Family Functioning over time.

**Table 15.** Two-way repeated measures ANOVA results of mothers' and fathers' assessments of General Family Functioning over time.

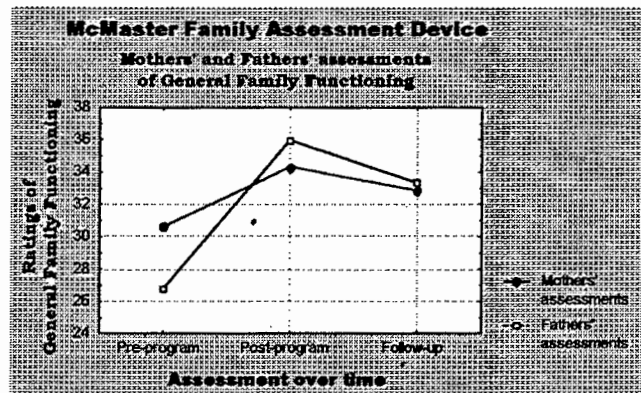
df Effect	MS Effect	df Error	MS Error	F	p-level
Parent (P) – mother/father	3.35	14	73.04	.05	.83
Time (T)	150.26	28	15.2	9.9	.0006**
Interaction – P x T	28.64	28	15.2	1.88	.17

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ ) Time = pre-program/post-program/follow-up measurements

**Table 16.** LSD post hoc test results of mothers' and fathers' assessments of General Family Functioning over time.

		Mothers' assessments			Fathers' assessments		
		Pre-program	Post-program	Follow-up	Pre-program	Post-program	Follow-up
Mothers' assessments	Means	30.64	34.34	32.9	26.8	36.0	33.4
	Prp		.03*	.18	.08	.02*	.20
	Pop	.033		.39	.001**	.44	.65
	Fup	.18	.39		.007**	.15	.82
Fathers' assessments	Prp	.08	.001**	.007**		.0008**	.01**
	Pop	.02*	.44	.15	.0008**		.30
	Fup	.20	.65	.82	.01**	.30	

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ ) Prp = pre-program; Pop = post-program; Fup = follow-up



**Figure 7.** Means of mothers' and fathers' assessments of General Family Functioning over time.

Results indicated that there was a statistically significant 'time' effect for mothers' and fathers' assessments of General Family Functioning over time ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ). LSD post hoc test results indicated that these differences occurred between means 1 (pre-program) and 2 (post-program) for mothers' and fathers' assessments (at  $\alpha = 0.05$  and  $\alpha = 0.01$  for mothers and fathers respectively); and between means 1 (pre-program) and 3 (follow-up) for fathers' assessments at  $\alpha = 0.01$ . Mothers and fathers assessed overall family functioning to have improved during program intervention, and fathers assessed that family functioning improved over the cumulative time period that included program intervention and the fifteen months thereafter.

i) Second statistical analysis used to assess FAD results.

A two-way repeated measures ANOVA, with 'time' as the within subjects factor (pre-program/pre-divorce; pre-program/post-divorce; post-program/post-divorce), and 'parent' as the between subjects factor (mother/father assessments), was used as the statistical tool in the second analysis. Parents rated whether changes occurred in family functioning during the divorce/separation event (between means 1 and 2) and/or during program intervention (between means 2 and 3). For this analysis parents rated the two pre-program FAD questionnaires with the following instruction:

1. *Answer the first questionnaire from the point of view of your family immediately before the time active steps were taken to separate, or to institute divorce action (pre-program/pre-divorce assessment).*
2. *Answer the second questionnaire from the point of view of your family as it exists at present (pre-program/post-divorce assessment).*

The post-program FAD questionnaire was rated by parents only in terms of instruction 2. above (post-program/post-divorce assessment). At the pre-program measurement, comparative differences in pre-divorce (mean 1) and post-divorce (mean 2) assessments, indicated that these statistically significant changes had occurred during the divorce/separation period. At the post-program measurement only post-divorce functioning was assessed. Thus any statistically significant difference between pre-program/post-divorce (mean 2) and post-program/post-divorce (mean 3) assessments would indicate that post-divorce changes in family functioning had occurred during program intervention.

The following research questions were asked:

1. *Have changes in family functioning occurred during the divorce/separation period?*

This would be indicated if there were statistically significant differences between pre-program/ pre-divorce (mean 1) and pre-program/post-divorce (mean 2) measurements. Pre-divorce and post-divorce status was compared at the pre-program measurement even before program intervention was introduced.



2. *Did family functioning change during program intervention?* This was indicated if statistically significant differences occurred between pre-program/post-divorce (mean 2) and post-program/post-divorce (mean 3) measurements. Pre-program and post-program assessments of divorced parents were being compared. Parents assessed family functioning during program intervention from their post-divorce perspective.
3. *Did family functioning change over the cumulative time period represented by the divorce/separation event and program intervention?* This would be indicated if there was a statistically significant difference between pre-program/pre-divorce (mean 1) and post-program/post-divorce (mean 3) measurements.

When interpreting these results the same precautions were taken, as already outlined at the beginning of this chapter (pp. 68/69), pertaining to repeated measures analyses and Type 1 error rates.

The results of this analysis are summarized in the Table 17 and 18 on the following page.

ii) Summary of FAD results for second statistical analysis.

**Table 17.** Two-way repeated measures ANOVA results for mothers' and fathers' pre-/post divorce assessments of all FAD sub-sections during the divorce/separation event and program intervention.

Sub-sections of FAD		df	F	p
<b>Problem Solving</b>	Parent (S) – mother/father	1, 17	0.04	0.85
	Time (T)	2, 34	11.52	0.0002**
	Interaction – S x T	2, 34	6.0	0.006**
<b>Communication</b>	Parent (S) – mother/father	1, 16	0.19	0.66
	Time (T)	2, 32	6.85	0.003**
	Interaction – S x T	2, 32	2.60	0.09
<b>Role Functioning</b>	Parent (S) – mother/father	1, 16	0.15	0.71
	Time (T)	2, 32	4.7	0.02*
	Interaction – S x T	2, 32	0.29	0.75
<b>Affective Responsiveness</b>	Parent (S) – mother/father	1, 17	1.20	0.29
	Time (T)	2, 34	20.10	0.0002**
	Interaction – S x T	2, 34	2.20	0.13
<b>Affective Involvement</b>	Parent (S) – mother/father	1, 16	0.19	0.67
	Time (T)	2, 32	11.57	0.0002**
	Interaction – S x T	2, 32	3.86	0.03*
<b>Behavioral Control</b>	Parent (S) – mother/father	1, 17	0.84	0.37
	Time (T)	2, 34	9.24	0.0006**
	Interaction – S x T	2, 34	0.11	0.90
<b>General Family Functioning</b>	Parent (S) – mother/father	1, 16	0.14	0.71
	Time (T)	2, 32	19.56	0.000003**
	Interaction – S x T	2, 32	2.34	0.11

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ ) Time = pre-program/pre-divorce compared to pre-program/post-divorce compared to post-program/post-divorce.

**Table 18.** Means of two-way repeated measures ANOVA results for mothers' and fathers' pre-/post-divorce assessments of FAD sub-sections over the divorce/separation event and program intervention.

Sub-sections of FAD	Assessment over time	Pre-program / Pre-divorce	Pre-program / Post-divorce	Post-program / Post-divorce
<b>Problem Solving</b>	Mothers' assessments	12.27	16.0	17.18
	Fathers' assessments	15.0	12.63	18.25
<b>Communication</b>	Mothers' assessments	16.5	19.3	19.3
	Fathers' assessments	18.13	18.13	19.88
<b>Role Functioning</b>	Mothers' assessments	20.7	23.0	24.4
	Fathers' assessments	21.88	22.5	22.25
<b>Affective Responsiveness</b>	Mothers' assessments	12.09	15.55	17.18
	Fathers' assessments	14.0	14.75	19.88
<b>Affective Involvement</b>	Mothers' assessments	16.4	19.0	20.0
	Fathers' assessments	18.38	17.25	21.38
<b>Behavioral Control</b>	Mothers' assessments	23.55	25.73	28.36
	Fathers' assessments	23.75	26.88	29.63
<b>General Family Functioning</b>	Mothers' assessments	23.2	30.4	35.0
	Fathers' assessments	27.25	27.13	36.63

To be discussed are the summarized results presented in Table 17 above.

iii) Summarized discussion of second FAD analysis.

It can be seen from the summarized results presented in Table 17 that mothers' and fathers' pre-/post-divorce assessments indicated that there were statistically significant 'time' effects for all areas of family functioning at  $\alpha = 0.01$ , except for Role Functioning where there was a statistically significant 'time' effect at  $\alpha = 0.05$ . There were also statistically significant interactive effects in the following areas of family functioning: Problem Solving at  $\alpha = 0.01$ , and Affective Involvement at  $\alpha = 0.05$ .

Detailed section (iv) results to follow indicated where these statistically significant differences occurred for mothers' assessments and fathers' assessments.

Both mothers and fathers indicated that there had been a statistically significant improvement in the cumulative time period that included the divorce/separation event and program intervention in the following area of family functioning at  $\alpha = 0.01$ : Problem Solving, Affective Responsiveness, Affective Involvement, Behavioral Control and General Family Functioning. Mothers and fathers also assessed that General Family Functioning had statistically improved during program intervention (at  $\alpha = 0.05$  and  $\alpha = 0.01$  for mothers and fathers respectively). This was an unusual result as mothers predominantly assessed different areas of family functioning to improve during the divorce/separation event and not during program intervention.

Mothers also assessed there had been a statistically significant improvement in Communication and Role Functioning over this time period ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ), but fathers did not concur with these latter assessments.

Mothers assessed the following areas of family functioning to have improved significantly during the *divorce/separation event*, but not during program intervention: Problem Solving, Communication, Affective Involvement and General Family Functioning at  $\alpha = 0.01$ , and Affective Responsiveness at  $\alpha = 0.05$ . Fathers experienced a trend that family functioning had actually declined in these areas during the same time period, but this trend was not statistically significant.

Fathers assessed the following areas of family functioning to have improved during *program intervention*, but not during the divorce/separation event: Problem Solving, Affective Responsiveness, Affective Involvement and General Family Functioning at  $\alpha = 0.01$ . Mothers experienced there to have been no statistically significant improvement in these areas during program intervention.

Detailed section (iv) results for statistically significant changes indicated in Table 17 are now illustrated in the following format: initially there is a table of two-way repeated measures ANOVA results, followed by a second table of LSD post hoc test results, and finally a graphical display of means of change in relevant FAD sub-sections during the divorce/separation event and program intervention.

iv) Detailed illustration of second analysis of FAD results.

Illustrated below are the results of mothers' and fathers' assessments of Problem Solving in the family during the divorce/separation event and program intervention.

**Table 19.** Two-way repeated measures ANOVA results of mothers' and fathers' assessments of Problem Solving in the family during the divorce/separation event and program intervention.

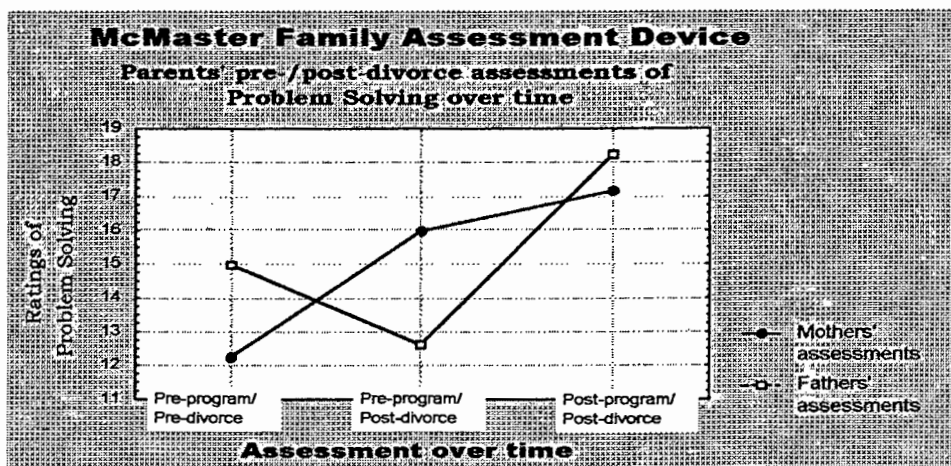
df	MS	df	MS		
Effect	Effect	Error	Error	F	p-level
Parent (P) – mother/father	.27	17	7.40	.04	.85
Time (T)	88.57	34	7.67	11.52	.0002**
Interaction P x T	46.11	34	7.67	6.0	.005**

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ ) Time = pre-program/pre-divorce compared to pre-program/post-divorce compared to post-program/post-divorce.

**Table 20.** LSD post hoc test results of mothers' and fathers' assessments of Problem Solving in the family during the divorce/separation event and program intervention.

		<i>Mothers' assessments</i>			<i>Fathers' assessments</i>		
		Pre-program/ pre-divorce	Pre-program/ post-divorce	Post-program/ post-divorce	Pre-program/ pre-divorce	Pre-program/ post-divorce	Post-program/ post-divorce
Means		12.27	16.0	17.18	15.0	12.63	18.25
Mothers' assessments	Pp/pd		.003**	.0002**	.04*	.77	.00005**
	Pp/po	.003**		.32	.44	.01**	.09
	Po/po	.0002**	.32		.10	.001**	.41
Fathers' assessments	Pp/pd	.04*	.44	.10		.10	.03*
	Pp/po	.79	.01**	.001**	.10		.0002**
	Po/po	.00005**	.09	.41	.03*	.0002**	

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ ) Pp/pd = pre-program/pre-divorce; Pp/po = pre-program/post-divorce; Po/po = post-program/post-divorce.



**Figure 8.** Means of mothers' and fathers' pre-/post-divorce assessments of Problem Solving over time.

Results indicated that there was a statistically significant 'time' and interactive effect for mothers' and fathers' assessments of Problem Solving in the family during the divorce/separation event and program intervention ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ). LSD post hoc test results indicated that these differences occurred between means 1 (pre-program/pre-divorce) and 2 (pre-program/post-divorce) for mothers' assessments; between means 2 (pre-program/post-divorce) and 3 (post-program/post-divorce) for fathers' assessments; and between means 1 (pre-program/pre-divorce) and 3 (post-program/post-divorce) for both mothers' and fathers' assessments. Mothers experienced an improvement in problem solving in the family during the divorce/separation event ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ), whereas fathers experienced an improvement in this area of family functioning during program intervention ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ). In fact fathers experienced a decrease in problem solving ability in the family during the divorce/separation event. This trend however was not statistically significant. Both mothers ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ) and fathers ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) experienced an overall improvement in problem solving in the family during the cumulative period of the divorce/separation event and program intervention.

There is a disordinal interaction effect in that fathers assessed problem solving ability in the family to be declining during the divorce/separation event, whereas mothers assessed the same area of family functioning to be improving during this time period. During program intervention however, mothers assessed there to have been no significant improvement in problem solving efficacy within the family, whereas fathers rated a significant improvement in this area of family functioning.

Illustrated below are the results of mothers' and fathers' assessments of Communication in the family during the divorce/separation event and program intervention.

**Table 21.** Two-way repeated measures ANOVA results of mothers' and fathers' assessments of Communication in the family during the divorce/separation event and program intervention.

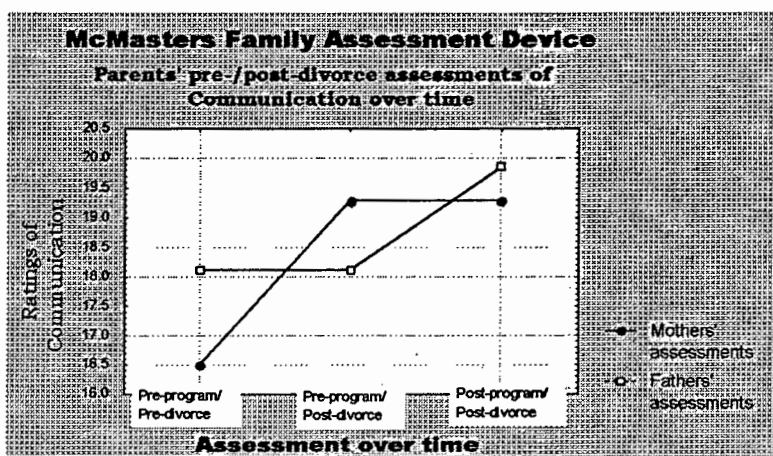
df Effect	MS Effect	df Error	MS Error	F	p-level
Parent (P) – mother/father	1.56	16	8.0	.19	.66
Time (T)	23.41	32	3.42	6.85	.003**
Interaction P x T	8.89	32	3.42	2.60	.09

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ ) Time = pre-program/pre-divorce compared to pre-program/post-divorce compared to post-program/post-divorce.

**Table 22.** LSD post hoc test results of mothers' and fathers' assessments of Communication in the family during the divorce/separation event and program intervention.

		Mothers' assessments			Fathers' assessments		
		Pre-program/ pre-divorce	Pre-program/ post-divorce	Post-program/ post-divorce	Pre-program/ pre-divorce	Pre-program/ post-divorce	Post-program/ post-divorce
Means		16.50	19.30	19.30	18.13	18.13	19.88
Mothers' assessments	Pp/pd		.002**	.002**	.07	.07	.0005**
	Pp/po	.002**		1.0	.19	.19	.52
	Po/po	.001892	1.000000		.19	.19	.52
Fathers' assessments	Pp/pd	.07	.19	.19		1.0	.07
	Pp/po	.07	.19	.19	1.0		.07
	Po/po	.0005**	.52	.52	.07	.07	

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ ) Pp/pd = pre-program/pre-divorce; Pp/po = pre-program/post-divorce; Po/po = post-program/post-divorce.



**Figure 9.** Means of mothers' and fathers' pre-/post-divorce assessments of Communication over time.

Results indicated that there was a statistically significant 'time' effect for mothers' and fathers' assessments of Communication in the family during the divorce/separation event and program intervention at  $\alpha = 0.01$ . LSD post hoc test results displayed that these changes occurred between means 1 (pre-program/pre-divorce) and 2 (pre-program/post-divorce), and between means 1 (pre-program/pre-divorce) and 3 (post-program/post-divorce) for mothers' assessments. There were no statistically significant LSD post hoc test results for fathers' assessments. Mothers assessed that communication in the family improved significantly during the divorce/separation event ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ), and in the overall time period that included the divorce/separation event and program intervention ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ).



Illustrated below are the results of mothers' and fathers' assessments of Role Functioning in the family during the divorce/separation event and program intervention.

**Table 23.** Two-way repeated measures ANOVA results of mothers' and fathers' assessments of Role Functioning in the family during the divorce/separation event and program intervention.

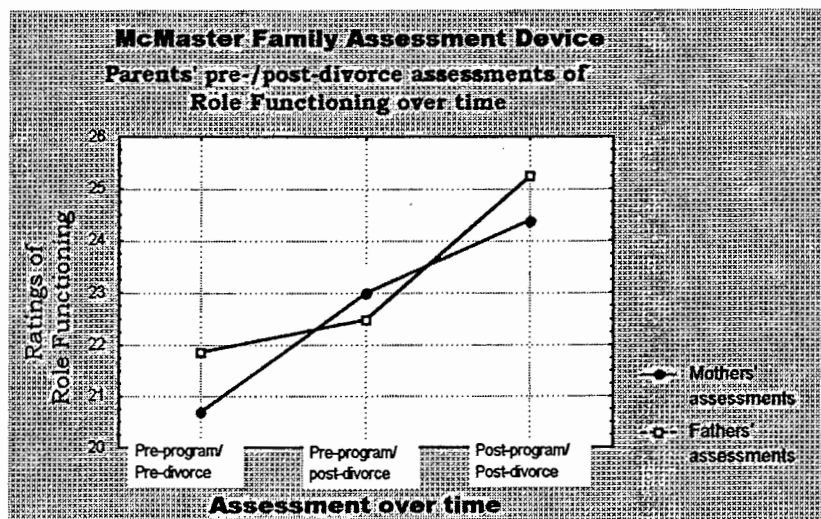
df Effect	MS Effect	df Error	MS Error	F	p-level
Parent (P) – mother/father	3.45	16	23.52	.15	.71
Time (T)	56.17	32	12.0	4.7	.02*
Interaction P x T	3.51	32	12.0	.29	.75

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ ) Time = pre-program/pre-divorce compared to pre-program/post-divorce compared to post-program/post-divorce.

**Table 24.** LSD post hoc test results of mothers' and fathers' assessments of Role Functioning in the family during the divorce/separation event and program intervention.

		Mothers' assessments			Fathers' assessments		
		Pre-program/ pre-divorce	Pre-program/ post-divorce	Post-program/ post-divorce	Pre-program/ pre-divorce	Pre-program/ post-divorce	Post-program/ post-divorce
Means		20.70	23.0	24.40	21.88	22.50	25.25
Mothers' assessments	Pp/pd		.15	.02*	.48	.28	.009**
	Pp/po	.15		.37	.50	.76	.18
	Po/po	.02*	.37		.13	.26	.61
Fathers' assessments	Pp/pd	.48	.50	.13		.72	.06
	Pp/po	.28	.76	.26	.72		.12
	Po/po	.009**	.18	.61	.06	.12	

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ ) Pp/pd = pre-program/pre-divorce; Pp/po = pre-program/post-divorce; Po/po = post-program/post-divorce.



**Figure 10.** Means of mothers' and fathers' pre-/post-divorce assessments of Role Functioning over time.

Results indicated that there was a statistically significant 'time' effect for mothers' and fathers' pre-/post-divorce assessments of Role Functioning during the divorce/separation event and program intervention at  $\alpha = 0.05$ . LSD post-hoc test results indicated that these differences occurred between means 1 (pre-program/pre-divorce) and 3 (post-program/post-divorce) for mothers' assessments. Mothers indicated that role functioning in the family improved over the cumulative time period that included the divorce/separation event and program intervention ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). There were no statistically significant changes in fathers' assessments of role functioning in the family over the same period of time.

Illustrated below are the results of mothers' and fathers' assessments of Affective Responsiveness in the family during the divorce/separation event and program intervention.

**Table 25.** Two-way repeated measures ANOVA results of mothers' and fathers' assessments of Affective Responsiveness in the family during the divorce/separation event and program intervention.

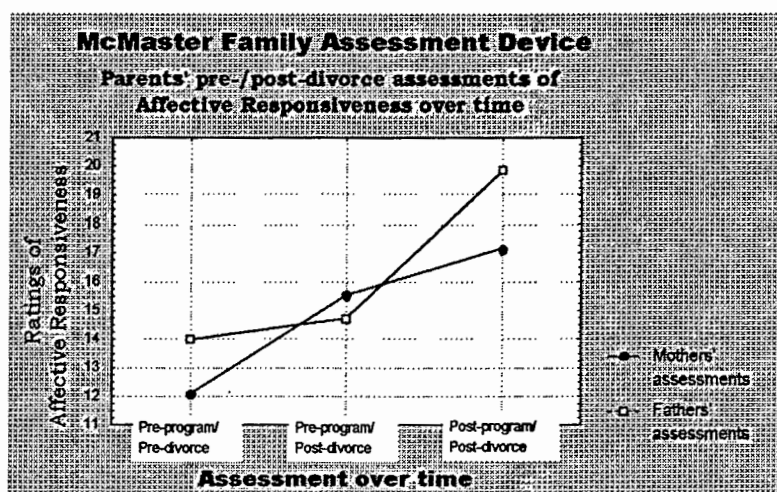
df Effect	MS Effect	df Error	MS Error	F	p-level
Parent (P) – mother/father	22.37	17	18.70	1.20	.29
Time (T)	141.76	34	7.05	20.10	.000002**
Interaction P x T	15.52	34	7.05	2.20	.13

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ ) Time = pre-program/pre-divorce compared to pre-program/post-divorce compared to post-program/post-divorce.

**Table 26.** LSD post hoc test results of mothers' and fathers' assessments of Affective Responsiveness in the family during the divorce/separation event and program intervention.

		Mothers' assessments			Fathers' assessments		
		Pre-program/ pre-divorce	Pre-program/ post-divorce	Post-program/ post-divorce	Pre-program/ pre-divorce	Pre-program/ post-divorce	Post-program/ post-divorce
Means		12.09	15.55	17.18	14.0	14.75	19.88
Mothers' assessments	Pp/pd		.004**	.00007**	.13	.04*	.00**
	Pp/po	.004**		.158	.22	.52	.001**
	Po/po	.00007**	.158		.015**	.06	.04*
Fathers' Assessments	Pp/pd	.13	.22	.015**		.58	.0001**
	Pp/po	.04*	.52	.057	.58		.0005**
	Po/po	.00**	.001**	.04*	.0001**	.0005**	

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ ) Pp/pd = pre-program/pre-divorce; Pp/po = pre-program/post-divorce; Po/po = post-program/post-divorce.



**Figure 11.** Means of mothers' and fathers' pre-/post-divorce assessments of Affective Responsiveness over time.

Results indicated that there was a statistically significant 'time' effect for mothers' and fathers' pre-/post-divorce assessments during the divorce/separation event and program intervention at  $\alpha = 0.01$ . LSD post hoc test results indicated that these differences occurred between means 1 (pre-program/pre-divorce) and 2 (pre-program/post-divorce) for mothers' assessments; between means 2 (pre-program/post-divorce) and 3 (post-program/post-divorce) for fathers' assessments; and between means 1 (pre-program/pre-divorce) and 3 (post-program/post-divorce) for mothers' and fathers' assessments.

Mothers indicated that affective responsiveness in the family improved significantly during the divorce/separation event ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), whereas fathers felt that the same area of family functioning had improved significantly during program intervention ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ).

Mothers and fathers assessed there had been an overall improvement in affective responsiveness in the cumulative time period that included the divorce/separation event and program intervention ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ). These results showed a similar trend to mothers' and fathers' assessments of problem solving in the family over time.

Illustrated below are the results of mothers' and fathers' assessments of Affective Involvement in the family during the divorce/separation event and program intervention.

**Table 27.** Two-way repeated measures ANOVA results of mothers' and fathers' assessments of Affective Involvement in the family during the divorce/separation event and program intervention.

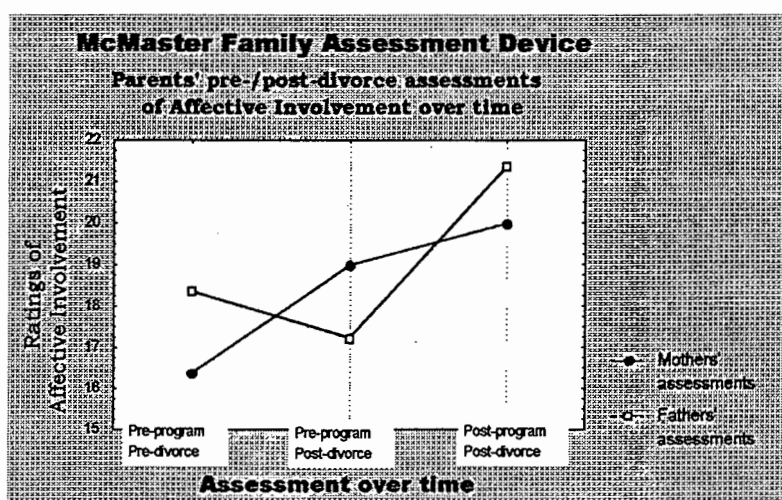
df Effect	MS Effect	df Error	MS Error	F	p-level
Parent (P) – mother/father	3.79	16	19.76	.19	.67
Time (T)	53.33	32	4.61	11.57	.0001**
Interaction P x T	17.78	32	4.61	3.86	.03*

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ ) Time = pre-program/pre-divorce compared to pre-program/post-divorce compared to post-program/post-divorce.

**Table 28.** LSD post hoc test results of mothers' and fathers' assessments of Affective Involvement in the family during the divorce/separation event and program intervention.

		Mothers' assessments			Fathers' assessments		
		Pre-program/ pre-divorce	Pre-program/ post-divorce	Post-program/ post-divorce	Pre-program/ pre-divorce	Pre-program/ post-divorce	Post-program/ post-divorce
Mothers' assessments	Means	16.40	19.0	20.0	18.38	17.25	21.38
	Pp/pd		.01**	.0007**	.06	.41	.00003**
	Pp/po	.01**		.31	.54	.10	.03*
Fathers' assessments	Po/po	.0007**	.31		.12	.01**	.19
	Pp/pd	.06	.54	.12		.30	.009**
	Pp/po	.41	.10	.01**	.30		.0005**
	Po/po	.00003**	.03*	.19	.009**	.0005**	

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ ) Pp/pd = pre-program/pre-divorce; Pp/po = pre-program/post-divorce; Po/po = post-program/post-divorce.



**Figure 12.** Means of mothers' and fathers' pre-/post-divorce assessments of Affective Involvement over time.

Results indicated that there was a statistically significant 'time' ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ) and interactive effect ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) for mothers' and fathers' assessments of Affective Involvement in the family over time. These differences occurred between means 1 (pre-program/pre-divorce) and 2 (pre-program/post-divorce) for mothers' assessments; between means 2 (pre-program/post-divorce) and 3 (post-program/post-divorce) for fathers' assessments; and between means 1 (pre-program/pre-divorce) and 3 (post-program/post-divorce) for both mothers' and fathers' assessments. These results were very similar to the pattern of mothers' and fathers' assessments of Problem Solving and Affective Responsiveness in the family, the former trend being statistically significant.

Mothers experienced affective involvement in the family to improve during the divorce/separation event ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ), whereas fathers experienced the same area of family functioning to improve significantly during program intervention ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ). Mothers and fathers assessed there to be an over all improvement in affective involvement in the family in the cumulative time period that included program intervention and the divorce/separation event ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ).

The disordinal interactive effect occurred when mothers were experiencing affective involvement in their family units to be improving during the divorce/separation event whereas fathers were experiencing family functioning in this area to be declining. During program intervention when fathers were experiencing a significant improvement in affective involvement in their family units, mothers were experiencing no significant improvement in this area.

Illustrated below are the results of mothers' and fathers' assessments of Behavioral Control in the family during the divorce/separation event and program intervention.

**Table 29.** Two-way repeated measures ANOVA results of mothers' and fathers' assessments of Behavioral Control in the family during the divorce/separation event and program intervention.

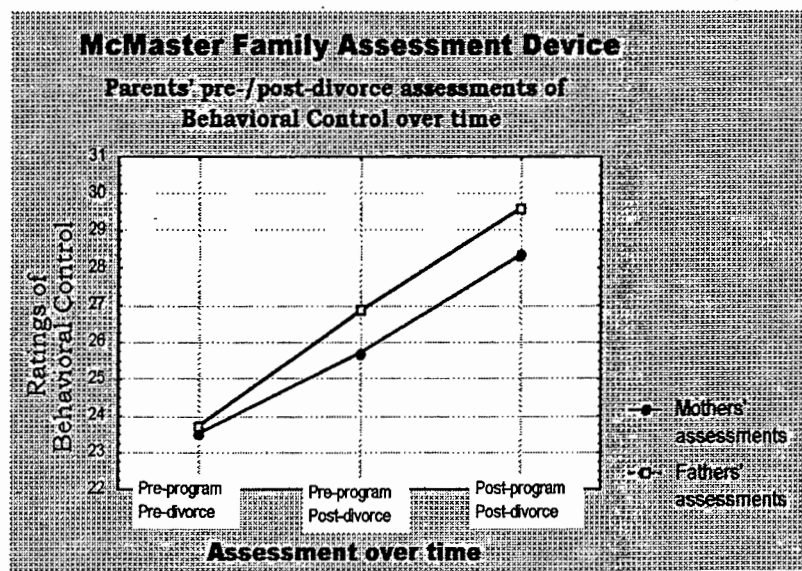
	df Effect	MS Effect	df Error	MS Error	F	p-level
Parent (P) – mother/father	1	10.55	17	12.63	.84	.37
Time (T)	2	132.40	34	14.32	9.24	.0006**
Interaction P x T	2	1.56	34	14.32	.11	.90

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ ) Time = pre-program/pre-divorce compared to pre-program/post-divorce compared to post-program/post-divorce.

**Table 30.** LSD post hoc test results of mothers' and fathers' assessments of Behavioral Control in the family during the divorce/separation event and program intervention.

		Mothers' assessments			Fathers' assessments		
		Pre-program/ pre-divorce	Pre-program/ post-divorce	Post-program/ post-divorce	Pre-program/ pre-divorce	Pre-program/ post-divorce	Post-program/ post-divorce
	Means	23.55	25.73	28.36	23.75	26.88	29.63
Mothers' assessments	Pp/pd		.19	.005**	.91	.07	.001**
	Pp/po	.19		.11	.27	.52	.03*
	Po/po	.005**	.11		.01**	.40	.48
Fathers' assessments	Pp/pd	.91	.27	.01**		.11	.003**
	Pp/po	.07	.52	.40	.11		.16
	Po/po	.001**	.03*	.48	.003**	.16	

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ ) Pp/pd = pre-program/pre-divorce; Pp/po = pre-program/post-divorce; Po/po = post-program/post-divorce.



**Figure 13.** Means of mothers' and fathers' pre-/post-divorce assessments of Behavioral Control over time.

Results indicated that there was a statistically significant 'time' effect for mothers' and fathers' pre-/post-divorce assessments of Behavioral Control in the family during the divorce/separation event and program intervention ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ). LSD post hoc test results indicated that these differences occurred between means 1 (pre-program/pre-divorce) and 3 (post-program/post-divorce) for both mothers' and fathers' assessments. Parents assessed that behavioral control in the family did not improve significantly over the divorce/separation event or program intervention, but over the cumulative time period that included both of the aforementioned time periods ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ).



Illustrated below are the results of mothers' and fathers' assessments of General Family Functioning during the divorce/separation event and program intervention.

**Table 31.** Two-way repeated measures ANOVA results of mothers' and fathers' assessments of General Family Functioning during the divorce/separation event and program intervention.

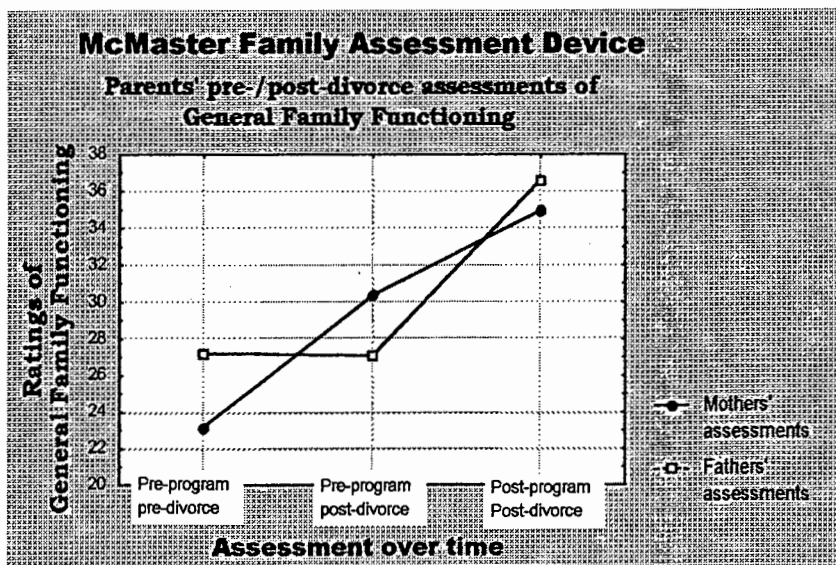
df Effect	MS Effect	df Error	MS Error	F	p-level
Parent (P) – mother/father	8.53	16	59.84	.14	.71
Time (T)	516.48	32	26.40	19.56	.000003**
Interaction P x T	61.89	32	26.40	2.34	.11

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ ) Time = pre-program/pre-divorce compared to pre-program/post-divorce compared to post-program/post-divorce.

**Table 32.** LSD post hoc test results of mothers' and fathers' assessments of General Family Functioning during the divorce/separation event and program intervention.

		Mothers' assessments			Fathers' assessments		
		Pre-program/ pre-divorce	Pre-program/ post-divorce	Post-program/ post-divorce	Pre-program/ pre-divorce	Pre-program/ post-divorce	Post-program/ post-divorce
Means		23.20	30.40	35.0	27.25	27.13	36.63
Mothers' assessments	Pp/pd		.004**	.00001**	.11	.12	.000005**
	Pp/po	.004**		.05*	.21	.19	.02*
	Po/po	.00001**	.05*		.003**	.003**	.51
Fathers' assessments	Pp/pd	.11	.21	.003**		.96	.0009**
	Pp/po	.12	.19	.003**	.96		.0008**
	Po/po	.000005**	.02*	.51	.0009**	.0008**	

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ ) Pp/pd = pre-program/pre-divorce; Pp/po = pre-program/post-divorce; Po/po = post-program/post-divorce.



**Figure 14.** Means of mothers' and fathers' pre-/post-divorce assessments of General Family Functioning over time.

Results indicated that there was a statistically significant 'time' effect for mothers' and fathers' pre-/post-divorce assessments of General Family Functioning during the divorce/separation event and program intervention at  $\alpha = 0.01$ . LSD post hoc test results indicated that these differences occurred between means 2 (pre-program/post-divorce) and 3 (post-program/post-divorce), and between means 1 (pre-program/pre-divorce) and 3 (post-program/post-divorce) for mothers' and fathers' assessments; and between means 1 (pre-program/pre-divorce) and 2 (pre-program/post-divorce) for mothers' assessments only. Mothers and fathers assessed overall family functioning to have improved during program intervention ( at  $\alpha = 0.05$  and  $\alpha = 0.01$  respectively), and in the cumulative time period that included program intervention and the divorce/separation event ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ). Only mothers assessed overall family functioning to have improved during the divorce/separation event ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ).

### **Parenting Contact Questionnaire (PCQ)**

The Parenting Contact Questionnaire was rated by 19 mothers, 8 fathers, 3 stepfathers and 3 stepmothers at the pre-program measurement; by 16 mothers, 10 fathers, 3 stepfathers and 3 stepmothers at the post-program measurement; and by 14 mothers, 6 fathers and 2 stepfathers at the follow-up measurement.

A single statistical analysis using a two-way repeated measures ANOVA was conducted on PCQ responses. A description of this analysis follows.

#### **i) Statistical analysis used to assess PCQ ratings.**

A two-way repeated measures ANOVA, with 'Time' (pre-program/post-program/follow-up) as the within subjects factor, and 'Parent' (mothers'/fathers' assessments) as the between subjects factor was used as the statistical tool of analysis. The first research question asked was whether there had been a statistically significant change in parenting contact, or contact between non-custodial parents and their children, over time. In other words had there been a change in any of the PSQ sections during program intervention, during the fifteen-month follow-up period, or in the cumulative time period that included program intervention and the fifteen months thereafter. The second research question asked was whether there was a statistically significant difference between mothers' and fathers' assessments. The final research question asked was whether there was an interaction between mothers' and fathers' assessments over time for any of the PCQ sections.

A summary of these results is presented in Tables 33 and 34 to follow.

ii) Overall research results for PCQ analysis:

**Table 33.** Two-way repeated measures ANOVA df, F and p results of mothers' and fathers' assessments of PCQ ratings for each section over time.

<i>Sub-sections of PCQ</i>		<i>Mothers' and Fathers' assessments</i>		
		df	F	p
<i>Amount of overall contact between non-custodial parents and their children.</i>	Parent (P) – mother/father	1, 22	10.2	0.004**
	Time (T)	2, 44	0.74	0.48
	Interaction – P x T	2, 44	0.16	0.86
<i>Amount of co-parental interaction between estranged parents.</i>	Parent (P) – mother/father	1, 16	12.5	0.003**
	Time (T)	2, 32	4.32	0.02*
	Interaction – P x T	2, 32	1.91	0.16
<i>Quality of co-parental interaction – degree of ongoing conflict.</i>	Parent (P) – mother/father	1, 10	0.06	0.81
	Time (T)	2, 20	1.11	0.35
	Interaction – P x T	2, 20	0.18	0.84
<i>Quality of co-parental interaction – degree of ongoing support.</i>	Parent (P) – mother/father	1, 12	2.37	0.15
	Time (T)	2, 24	4.47	0.02*
	Interaction – P x T	2, 24	2.23	0.13

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ ) Time = pre-program/post-program/follow-up measurements

**Table 34.** Two-way repeated measures ANOVA Mean results for mothers' and fathers' assessments of PCQ ratings for each sections over time.

<i>PCQ sub-sections</i>	<i>Mothers' assessments</i>			<i>Fathers' assessments</i>		
	Pre-program	Post-program	Follow-up	Pre-program	Post-program	Follow-up
<i>Overall child-parent contact.</i>	6.18	6.36	6.55	10.08	10.77	10.77
<i>Co-parenting interaction.</i>	8.58	9.33	7.33	18.0	22.67	12.67
<i>Degree of conflict in co-parenting relationship.</i>	10.33	10.11	7.22	9.67	10.67	8.67
<i>Degree of support in co-parenting relationship.</i>	9.78	9.33	8.33	13.6	16.2	10.0

To follow is a discussion of the summarized results above.

### iii) Discussion of summarized PCQ results.

Summarized PCQ results displayed in Table 34 indicated that there were statistically significant 'parent' effects for overall contact between non-custodial parents and their children (section one), and for co-parental contact (section two) at  $\alpha = 0.01$ . There was also a statistically significant 'time' effect for co-parental contact at  $\alpha = 0.05$ , and for support experienced in the co-parenting relationship (section three) at  $\alpha = 0.05$ .

Detailed section (iv) results to follow indicated that fathers (predominantly the non-custodial parent) assessed that they had more adequate contact with their children, than mothers (predominantly the custodial parent) assessed them to have ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ). This pattern did not change during program intervention or in the fifteen-month follow-up period thereafter.

Section (iv) results indicated that fathers experienced co-parental contact as functioning on a higher level, and to be more supportive ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ), than mothers assessed the same relationship to be. Fathers indicated that the co-parenting contact, and the support experienced in this relationship, declined significantly during the fifteen months after program completion. One could hypothesize that parent meetings facilitated the co-parenting relationship in a way that was not sustained in the fifteen months after program completion.

To follow are a detailed discussion of statistically significant results. They are displayed in the following format: initially there is a table of two-way repeated measures ANOVA results, followed by a second table displaying LSD post hoc test results (where necessary), and finally there is a graphical display of changes in PSQ sections as reported by mothers and fathers over time. LSD post hoc test results are only necessary when there is a statistically significant 'time' effect.

Although no statistically significant differences were recorded between parents' assessments of co-parental conflict over time, fathers assessed there to be an average of 60.4% conflict during co-parental contact, whereas mothers indicated that they

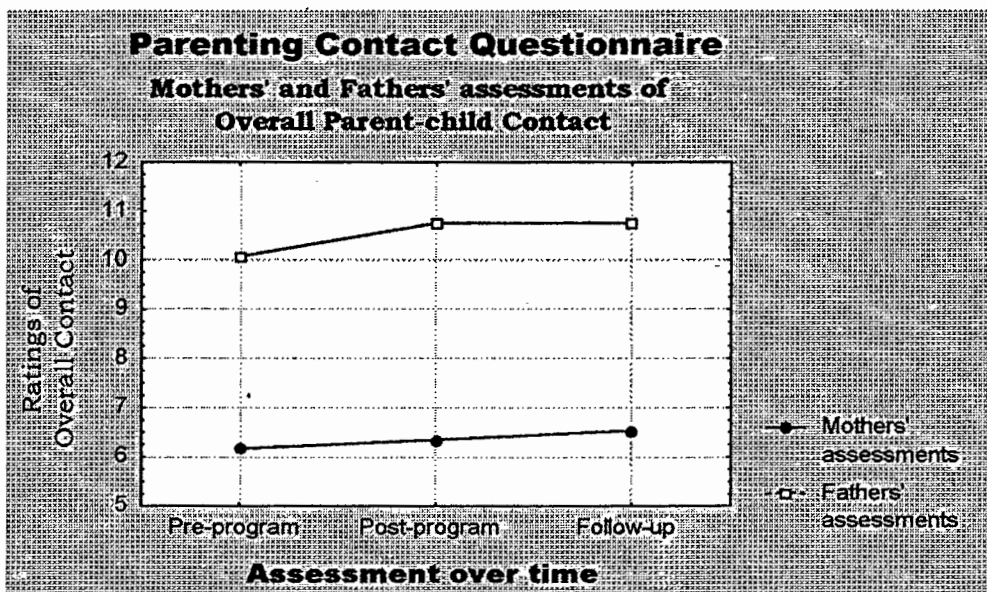
experienced 57.6% conflict during the same interaction. There is an above average degree of ongoing conflict in the co-parenting relationship that does not change during program intervention, or in the fifteen-month follow-up period. According to Amato and Keith (1983) inter-parental conflict creates an aversive home environment in which children experience stress, unhappiness and insecurity. Parents in conflict find it difficult to be emotionally available to their children, and children who get caught up in inter-parental conflict experience deteriorating parent-child relationships, and feel guilty about their divided loyalties. Amato and Keith's (1983) metaanalysis of 92 studies of children's well being in the post-divorce situation indicated that conflict improved during the post-divorce process, according to these results this does not apply. The results of this study have important implications for future improvisations to CODIP.

iv) Detailed results of PCQ analyses.**Table 35.** Two-way repeated measures ANOVA results of mothers' and fathers' assessments of overall contact between non-custodial parents and their children over time.

df Effect	MS Effect	df Error	MS Error	F	p-level
Parent (P) – mother/father	311.55	22	30.55	10.20	.004**
Time (T)	1.90	44	2.56	.74	.48
Interaction – P x T	.40	44	2.56	.16	.86

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ ) Time = pre-program/post-program/follow-up measurements

There was no need to report LSD post hoc test results as the statistically significant 'parent' effect only compared two variables – mothers' and fathers' assessments.

**Figure 15.** Means of mothers' and fathers' assessments of overall contact between non-custodial parents and their children.

Results indicated that there was a statistically significant 'parent' effect at  $\alpha = 0.01$  for mothers' and fathers' overall assessments of the contact between non-custodial parents and their children. Fathers assessed their contact with their children to be at a much higher level of efficacy (87.8%) than mothers assessed the same relationship to be (53%). These perceptions did not change over time and were not affected by program intervention or the fifteen-month follow-up period thereafter.

Table 36. Two-way repeated measures ANOVA results for mothers' and fathers' assessments of post-divorce/separation co-parenting contact over time.

df Effect	MS Effect	df Error	MS Error	F	p-level
Parent (P) – mother/father	1051.57	16	84.12	12.50	.003**
Time (T)	144.45	32	33.47	4.32	.02*
Interaction – P x T	64.0	32	33.47	1.91	.16

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ ) Time = pre-program/post-program/follow-up measurements

Table 37. LSD post-hoc test results of mothers' and fathers' assessments of post-divorce/separation co-parenting contact over time.

		Mothers' assessments			Father's assessments		
		Pre-program	Post-program	Follow-up	Pre-program	Post-program	Follow-up
Means		8.58	9.33	7.33	18.0	22.67	12.67
Mothers' assessments	Prp		.75	.60	.003**	.00003**	.17
	Pop	.75		.40	.005**	.00006**	.26
	Fup	.60	.40		.0008**	.000008**	.07
Fathers' assessments	Prp	.003**	.005**	.0008**		.17	.12
	Pop	.00003**	.00006**	.000008**	.17		.005**
	Fup	.17	.26	.07	.12	.005**	

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ ) Prp = pre-program; Pop = post-program; Fup = follow-up

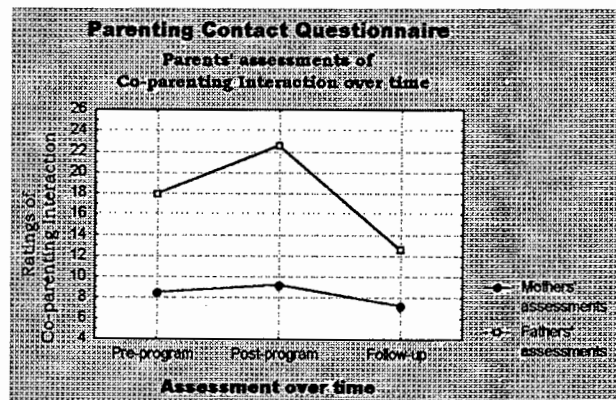


Figure 16. Means of mothers' and fathers' assessments of their post-divorce/separation co-parenting contact over time.

Results indicated a statistically significant 'parent' ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ) and 'time' effect ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) for mothers' and fathers' assessments of their ongoing post-divorce/separation co-parenting interaction over time. LSD post hoc test results indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between mothers' and fathers' assessments at pre-program and post-program measurements ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ). Fathers perceived there to be more co-parenting contact with their estranged spouses than mothers assessed there to be. Fathers also indicated that there was a statistically significant decline in the amount of co-parenting contact between means 2 (post-program) and 3 (follow-up) at  $\alpha = 0.01$ ; in other words, during the fifteen month follow-up period after program completion when there was no longer any therapeutic support in terms of CODIP intervention or parent meetings.



**Table 38.** Two-way repeated measures ANOVA results for mothers' and fathers' assessments of the degree of support in the post-divorce/separation co-parenting relationship over time.

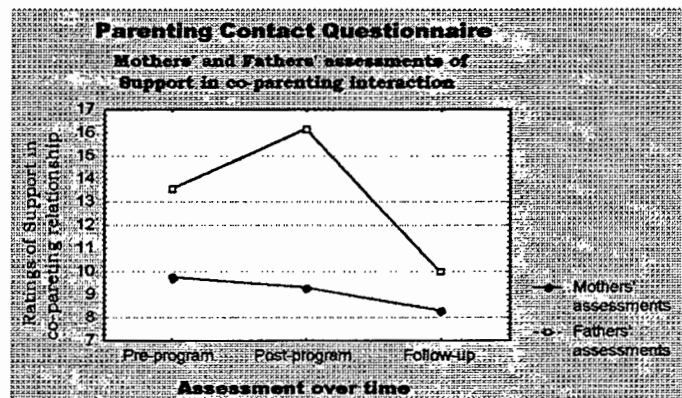
df Effect	MS Effect	df Error	MS Error	F	p-level
Parent (P) – mother/father	163.56	12	69.14	2.370	.15
Time (T)	43.89	24	9.83	4.47	.02*
Interaction – P x T	21.94	24	9.83	2.23	.13

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ ) Time = pre-program/post-program/follow-up measurements

**Table 39.** LSD post-hoc test results of mothers' and fathers' assessments of the amount of Support experienced in the post-divorce/separation co-parenting relationship over time.

	Means	Mothers' assessments			Father's assessments		
		Pre-program	Post-program	Follow-up	Pre-program	Post-program	Follow-up
Mothers' assessments	Prp	9.78	9.33	8.33	13.6	16.20	10.0
	Pop	.77	.77	.34	.04	.001**	.90
	Fup	.34	.51	.51	.022	.0006**	.71
Fathers' assessments	Prp	.04	.022	.006**	.20	.08	.08
	Pop	.001**	.0006**	.0001**	.20	.004**	.004**
	Fup	.90	.71	.35	.08	.004**	

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ ) Prp = pre-program; Pop = post-program; Fup = follow-up



**Figure 17.** Means of mothers' and fathers' assessments of support experienced in ongoing post-divorce/separation co-parental relationship.

Results indicated that there was a statistically significant 'time' effect at  $\alpha = 0.05$  for mothers' and fathers' assessments of support experienced in the ongoing post-divorce/separation co-parental relationship over time. LSD post hoc test results indicated that this difference occurred between means 2 (post-program) and 3 (follow-up) for fathers' assessments. Fathers experienced co-parental support to decrease significantly in the fifteen months after program intervention ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ). It is not clear whether the lack of support in the fifteen months after program completion was due to CODIP ending or due to the termination of the parent meetings held pre-program, mid-program and post-program.

### **Assessment of the Parenting Style Questionnaire (PSQ).**

The Parenting Style Questionnaire was used to ascertain the type of relationship that existed between the children participating in CODIP and their custodial and/or non-custodial parents. Responses to this questionnaire indicated not only children's relationship with their biological parents, but with stepparents as well. Parents assessed their own parenting style using the PSQ entitled "What kind of parent are you?" (Appendix 2), and children completed the PSQ entitled 'What kind of parenting style do you think your Mom/Dad has?' (Appendix 3).

Child and parent responses were compared to see if parents and children had the same perception of the parent's parenting style, and of the parent-child relationship.

Twenty-eight children completed the PSQ at pre-program and post-program measurements. Nineteen mothers, eight fathers, three stepfathers and three stepmothers completed the same questionnaire at the pre-program measurement, and sixteen mothers, ten fathers, three stepfathers and three stepmothers completed the PSQ at the post-program measurement. No follow-up measurement was taken for this questionnaire.

Three statistical analyses were conducted on all PSQ responses. All three analyses used the same tool of analysis, a two-way repeated measures ANOVA, with 'Source' ('Child-Mother'/'Child-Father'/'Mother-Father') as the between subjects factor, and 'Time' (pre-program/post-program) as the within subjects factor. The two variables being compared for the 'Child-Mother' 'source' effect in the first analysis was children's assessments of their mothers' parenting style, and mothers' assessments of their own parenting styles. The two variables being compared for the 'Child-Father' 'source' effect in the second analysis was children's assessments of their fathers' parenting style, compared to fathers' assessments of their own parenting styles. Finally, the two variables being compared for the 'Mother-Father' 'source' effect in the third analysis was children's assessments of their mothers' compared to their fathers' parenting styles. All three analyses asked the same research questions. The only factor that changed was whether the analysis was comparing 'Child-Mother', 'Child-Father' or 'Mother-Father'

assessments. These latter comparisons, the analytical procedures and the research questions asked, are explained in section (i).

i) Statistical analyses used to assess PSQ ratings.

The statistical procedure used for all three analyses was a two-way repeated measures ANOVA, with a between subjects 'Source' factor ('Child-Mother'/'Child-Father'/'Mother-Father') and a within subjects 'Time' factor (pre-program/post-program). The explanation for the main 'source' effects - 'Child-Mother', 'Child-Father' and 'Mother-Father' – have already been given.

The research questions asked for each analysis were:

1. *Was there a statistically significant main 'source' effect?* In other words, were there statistically significant differences between children's assessments of their parents' parenting styles, compared to parents' assessments of the same parenting styles ('Child-Mother' or 'Child-Father' comparative assessments); or were there statistically significant differences between children's comparative assessments of their mothers' and fathers' parenting styles ('Mother-Father' comparative assessments)? Statistically significant differences evidenced in response to this analysis would indicate large discrepancies between child-parent perceptions. This may indicate a 'weak' parent-child relationship with minimal common understanding and support.
2. *Was there a statistically significant main 'time' effect?* In other words were 'Child-Mother', 'Child-Father' or 'Mother-Father' comparative assessments significantly different during program intervention, i.e. between pre-program and post-program measurements?
3. *Were there statistically significant 'interaction' effects?* In other words were there statistically significant differences between child-parent perceptions, or between children's comparative mother-father perceptions, at different time measurements? An example of this may be a statistically significant difference between children's and parents' perceptions of parents' 'Disengaged' parenting style. The child and

parent may not only perceive the same parenting style differently, but they may perceive this difference to change over time. The child may perceive the parent to become less disengaged in their parenting style during program intervention, whereas the parent may see themselves as becoming more disengaged over the same time period.

The results of these analyses for 'Child-Mother', 'Child-Father' and 'Mother-Father' comparative assessments are summarized in Table 40 and 41. In Table 40 two-way repeated measures ANOVA df, F and p results are recorded. In Table 41 'source' and 'time' means are recorded. It was practically not possible to include all this information on one table.

## ii) Summarized research results for all three PSQ analyses.

**Table 40.** Two-way repeated measures ANOVA df, F and p results for comparative 'Child-Mother', 'Child-Father' and 'Mother-Father' assessments over time.

Parenting Styles		'Child-Mother' Assessments			'Child-Father' Assessments			'Mother-Father' Assessments		
		Source	Time	Inter-action	Source	Time	Inter-action	Source	Time	Inter-action
<b>Demanding</b>	df	1, 36			1, 28			1, 38		
	F	12.2	0.02	1.48	11.64	0.02	0.08	5.99	0.51	0.14
	p	0.001**	0.88	0.23	0.002**	0.09	0.79	0.02*	0.48	0.71
<b>Critical</b>	df	1, 36			1, 28			1, 38		
	F	6.38	0.29	0.01	6.91	0.74	4.41	3.37	1.36	0.28
	p	0.02*	0.59	0.92	0.01**	0.74	0.04*	0.07	0.25	0.6
<b>Over-protective</b>	df	1, 36			1, 28			1, 36		
	F	0.12	0.07	0.22	5.96	1.46	0.15	2.39	0.01	0.26
	P	0.73	0.8	0.64	0.02*	0.24	0.71	0.13	0.25	0.61
<b>Inadequate</b>	df	1, 36			1, 28			1, 38		
	F	2.72	0.23	2.44	7.51	2.7	0.003	3.74	1.64	0.02
	p	0.11	0.63	0.13	0.01**	0.11	0.96	0.06	0.21	0.9
<b>Disengaged</b>	df	1, 36			1, 28			1, 38		
	F	1.49	1.48	0.5	7.93	0.01	2.09	11.79	0.86	0.19
	P	0.23	0.23	0.49	0.009**	0.91	0.16	0.001**	0.36	0.67
<b>Validating</b>	df	1, 36			1, 28			1, 38		
	F	0.68	0.18	0.35	1.38	1.61	1.61	0.008	0.006	0.006
	p	0.41	0.67	0.56	0.25	0.22	0.22	0.93	0.94	0.94

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ )

'Child-Mother' Assessment = Children's assessments of mothers' parenting styles, compared to mothers' assessments of their own parenting styles.

'Child-Father' Assessment = Children's assessments of fathers' parenting styles compared to fathers' assessments of their own parenting styles.

'Mother-Father' Assessment = Children's comparative assessments of mothers' and fathers' parenting styles.

Source = 'Child-Mother', 'Child-Father' or 'Mother-Father' comparative assessments.

Time = Comparison between pre-program and post-program measurements.

Interaction = Indicates the interaction between 'Source' and 'Time'.

**Table 41.** Two-way repeated measures ANOVA Mean results for comparative 'Child-Mother', 'Child-Father' and 'Mother-Father' assessments over time.

Parenting Style		'Child-Mother' Assessments		'Child-Father' Assessments		'Mother-Father' Assessments	
		Child	Mother	Child	Father	Mother	Father
<b>Demanding</b>	Pre-program	15.14	19.31	13.06	17.5	15.14	13.06
	Post-program	15.86	18.38	13.28	17.42	15.86	13.28
<b>Critical</b>	Pre-program	11.55	13.5	10.56	12.17	11.55	10.56
	Post-program	11.27	13.31	9.83	13.17	11.27	9.83
<b>O/Protective</b>	Pre-program	14.64	14.69	13.22	15.25	14.64	13.22
	Post-program	14.55	15.0	13.61	16.0	14.55	13.61
<b>Inadequate</b>	Pre-program	9.5	10.88	8.52	10.42	9.5	8.5
	Post-program	9.86	10.19	8.94	10.83	9.86	8.94
<b>Disengaged</b>	Pre-program	13.5	14.69	11.11	13.0	13.5	11.11
	Post-program	13.32	14.0	10.61	13.58	13.32	10.61
<b>Validating</b>	Pre-program	17.0	17.44	17.06	17.92	17.0	17.06
	Post-program	16.9	18.0	17.06	19.17	16.91	17.06

iii) Summarized discussion of PSQ results.

It can be seen from the summary of results in Table 40 that there were statistically significant differences in the following areas:

- There were two statistically significant main 'source' effect for comparative 'Child-Mother' assessments for mothers' 'Demanding' ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ) and 'Critical' ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) parenting styles. Detailed section (iv) results to follow indicated that children perceived their mothers to be significantly less demanding and critical, than mothers perceived themselves to be.
- In the 'Child-Father' comparative assessments there were five statistically significant main 'source' effects for fathers' 'Demanding', 'Critical', 'Inadequate' and 'Disengaged' parenting styles at  $\alpha = 0.01$  and for fathers' 'Overprotective' parenting style at  $\alpha = 0.05$ . For all these parenting styles, section (iv) results to follow indicated that children perceived their fathers to be far less demanding, critical, overprotective, disengaged or inadequate in their parenting styles than fathers perceived themselves to be. There is also a statistically significant interactive effect in 'Child-Father' comparative assessments for fathers' 'Critical' parenting style ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). Section (iv) results indicated a disordinal interaction in that children not only perceived their fathers to be less critical in their parenting style, than fathers perceived themselves to be, but children experienced their fathers as becoming less critical in their parenting style during program intervention, whereas fathers experienced themselves as becoming more critical during the same time period.

It seems that in general, despite program intervention, there is a large comparative discrepancy between children's perceptions of fathers' parenting styles and fathers' perceptions of the same parenting styles. Program intervention does not seem to facilitate or improve a more common perception between children and their fathers. It needs to be considered that for twenty-six children, out of the twenty-eight children who participated in CODIP, fathers were the non-custodial parents. On average they have less daily contact with their children. Children may be assessing their fathers

more favorably than fathers assessed themselves, partly as a desire for increased contact and shared understanding with their non-custodial parents.

- In the 'Mother-Father' comparative assessments there were two statistically significant main 'source,' effects for 'Demanding' ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) and 'Disengaged' ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ) parenting styles. Results in section (iv) indicated that children perceived their mothers to be more demanding and disengaged in their parenting styles than they perceived their fathers to be. This is an interesting result in that mothers were predominantly the custodial parent and would be more engaged, time-wise, with their children. It may be that children experienced their mothers as emotionally uninvolved (disengaged) but at the same time, demanding.

Although there were no statistically significant 'parent' or 'time' effects for mothers' and fathers' 'Validating' parenting styles, according to the children who participated in CODIP, both parents functioned at a 71% level of efficacy in this area. Thus 'children of divorce' who participated in this study were indicating that their mothers and fathers were parenting in a way that best facilitated their post-divorce adjustment.

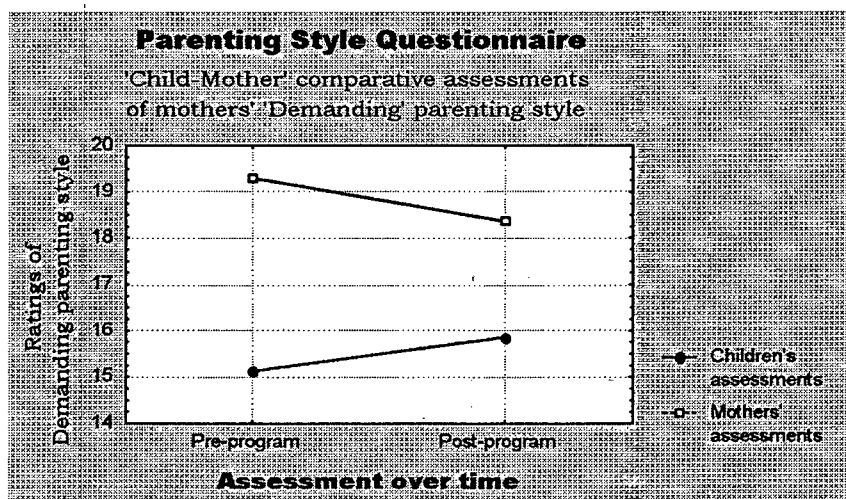
On the following pages statistically significant results are detailed in the following format. Initially there is a table of two-way repeated measures ANOVA results. There is only a second table illustrating LSD post-hoc test results where there has been an interactive effect. It was not necessary to provide LSD post-hoc test results for main 'source' effects ('Child-Mother'/'Child-Father'/'Mother-Father') or main 'time' effects (pre-program/post-program) as only two independent variables were being compared for either effect. Finally there is a graphical display of comparative 'Child-Mother', 'Child-Father' or 'Mother-Father' assessments over time.

iv) Analysis 1: Detailed discussion of PSQ results for ‘Child-Mother’ comparative assessments over time.

**Table 42.** Two-way repeated measures ANOVA results of comparative ‘Child-Mother’ assessments of mothers’ ‘Demanding’ parenting style over time.

	df Effect	MS Effect	df Error	MS Error	F	p
Source (S) – ‘Child-Mother’	1	207.13	36	16.99	12.19	.001**
Time (T) – pre-program/post-program	1	.20	36	8.68	.02	.88
Interaction - S x T	1	12.83	36	8.68	1.48	.23

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ )



**Figure 18.** Means for ‘Child-Mother’ comparative assessments of mothers’ ‘Demanding’ parenting style.

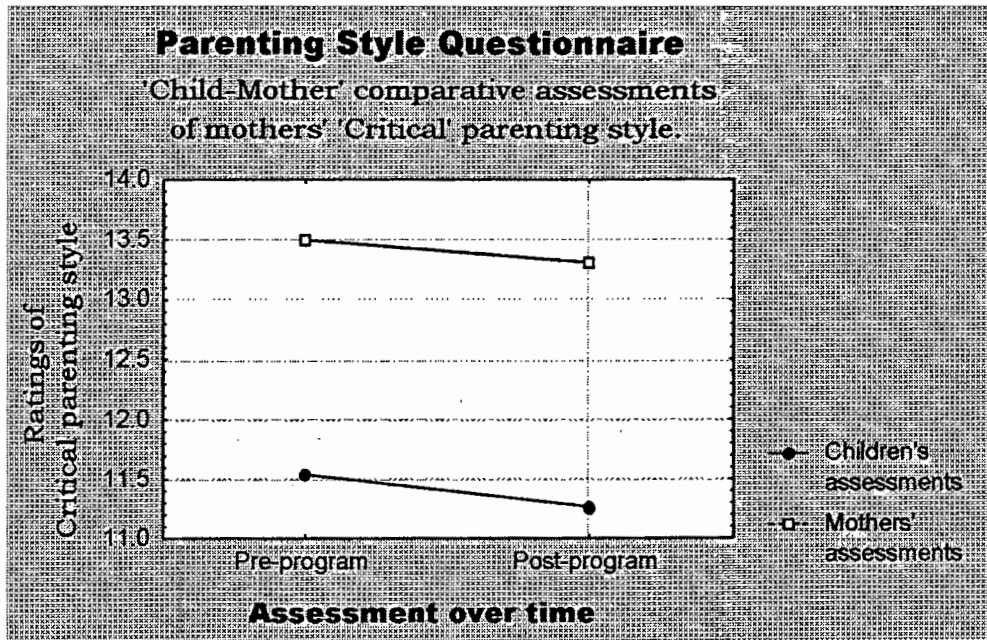
Results indicated that there was a statistically significant main ‘source’ effect, i.e. there was a significant difference between the way in which children assessed their mothers’ ‘Demanding’ parenting style and the way in which mothers assessed themselves ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ). Children perceived their mothers to be less demanding than mothers assessed themselves to be. Although there was not a significant interactive effect, the trend seemed to be that during program intervention children perceived their mothers to become increasingly more demanding, whereas mothers perceived themselves to become less demanding over the same time period. There was an indication that program intervention may be facilitating a closer perception between children and their mothers of the same parenting style.



**Table 43.** Two-way repeated measures ANOVA results of comparative 'Child-Mother' assessments of mothers' 'Critical' parenting style over time.

	df Effect	MS Effect	df Error	MS Error	F	p
Source (S) - 'Child-Mother'	1	73.89	36	11.58	6.38	.02*
Time (T) - pre-program/post-program	1	.98	36	3.4	.29	.59
Interaction - S x T	1	.03	36	3.4	.01	.92

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ )



**Figure 19.** Means for 'Child-Mother' comparative assessments of mothers' 'Critical' parenting style.

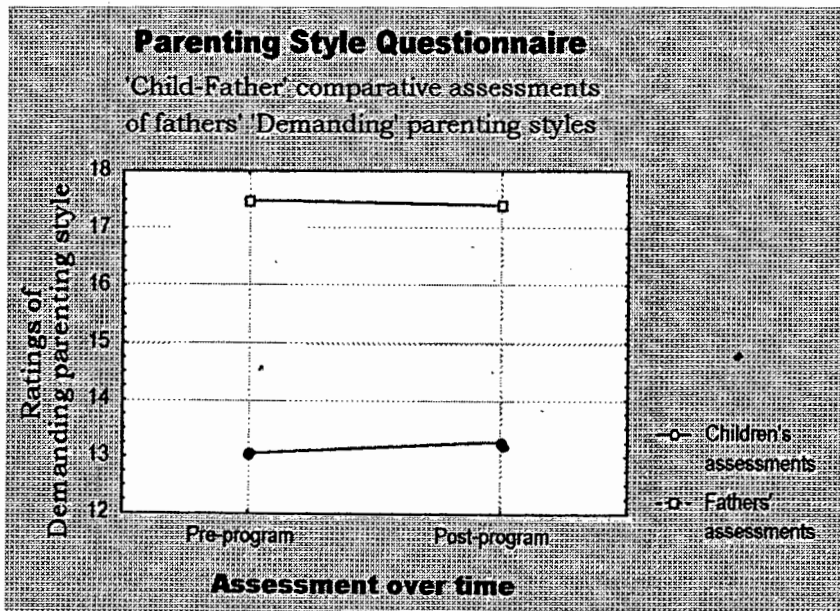
Results indicated that there was a statistically significant main 'source' effect for 'Child-Mother' comparative assessments of mothers' 'Critical' parenting style. Children perceived their mothers to be significantly less critical than mothers perceived themselves to be. The differences in 'Child-Mother' perceptions seemed to remain consistent throughout program intervention

iv) Analysis 2: Detailed discussion of PSQ results for 'Child-Father' comparative assessments over time.

**Table 44.** Two-way repeated measures ANOVA results of comparative 'Child-Father' assessments of fathers' 'Demanding' parenting style over time.

	df Effect	MS Effect	df Error	MS Error	F	p
Source (S) – 'Child-Father'	1	265.22	28	22.77	11.65	.002
Time (T) – pre-program/post-program	1	.0694	28	4.46478	.01555	.90
Interaction - S x T	1	.3361	28	4.46478	.07528	.79

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ ).



**Figure 20 .** Means for 'Child-Father' comparative assessments of fathers' 'Demanding' parenting style.

Results indicated that there was a statistically significant main 'source' effect, i.e. there was a significant difference between the way in which children assessed their fathers' 'Demanding' parenting style and the way in which fathers assessed themselves ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). Fathers perceived themselves to be more demanding.

**Table 45.** Two-way repeated measures ANOVA results of comparative 'Child-Father' assessments of fathers' 'Critical' parenting style over time.

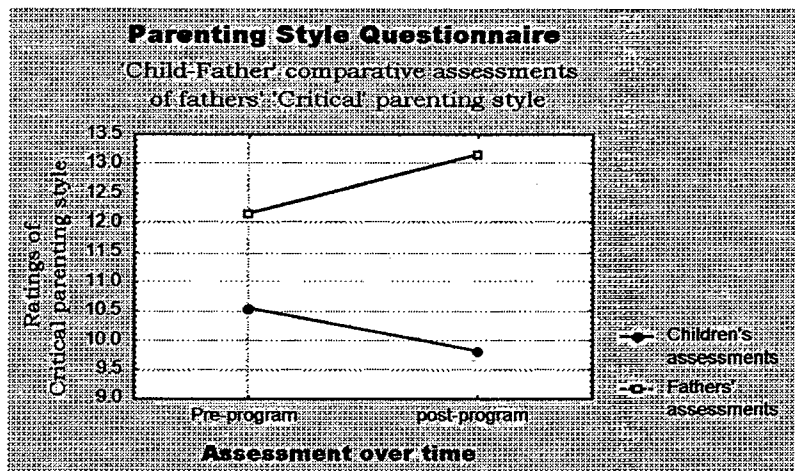
	df Effect	MS Effect	df Error	MS Error	F	p
<i>Source</i>	1	88.01	28	12.73	6.9	.01**
<i>Time</i>	1	.28	28	2.42	.11	.74
<i>Interaction</i>	1	10.68	28	2.42	4.4	.04*

**Table 46.** LSD post-hoc test results.

Means	CBCF 10.56	CACF 9.83	CBF 12.17	CAF 13.17
CBCF		.17	.01**	.0001**
CACF	.17		.0003*	.000004
CBF	.01**	.0003**		.13
CAF	.0001*	.000004	.13	

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ ) *Source* = Child-Father comparison;  
*Time* = pre/post-program comparison; *Interaction* – *Source* x *Time*.

CBCF = Children's pre-program assessments of their fathers' 'Critical' parenting styles;  
CACF = Children's post-program assessments of their fathers' 'Critical' parenting styles;  
CBF = Fathers' pre-program assessments of their own 'Critical' parenting styles;  
CAF = Fathers' post-program assessments of their own 'Critical' parenting styles.



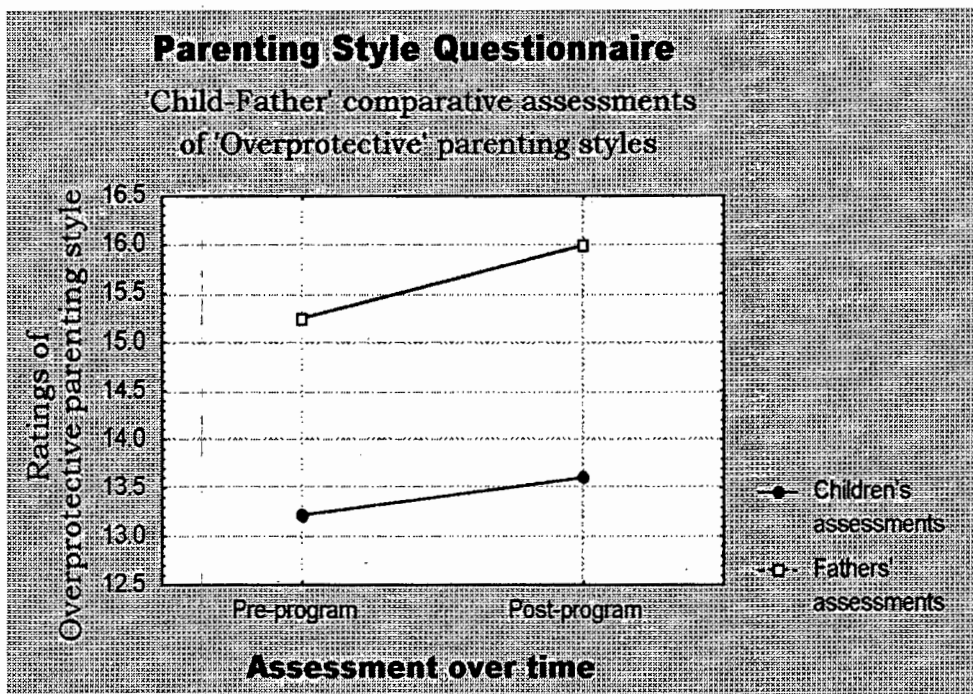
**Figure 21.** Means for 'Child-Father' comparative assessments of fathers' 'Critical' parenting style.

Results indicated that there was a statistically significant main 'source' ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ) and interactive ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) effect for 'Child-Father' comparative assessments of fathers' 'Critical' parenting style. LSD post hoc test results indicated that children perceived their fathers to be less critical than fathers perceived themselves to be ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ). Children assessed their fathers to become less critical as program intervention progressed, whereas fathers assessed themselves to become even more critical during the same time period. As with children's assessment of fathers' 'Demanding' parenting style, there is a large discrepancy between fathers' and children's perceptions of the same parenting style. This may indicate a lack of common perception in their relationship that does not seem to change during program intervention.

**Table 47.** Two-way repeated measures ANOVA results of comparative 'Child-Father' assessments of fathers' 'Overprotective' parenting style over time.

	df Effect	MS Effect	df Error	MS Error	F	p
Source (S) – 'Child-Father'	1	70.22	28	11.8	5.95	.02*
Time (T) – pre-program/post-program	1	4.67	28	3.19	1.46	.24
Interaction - S x T	1	.47	28	3.19	.15	.70

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ )



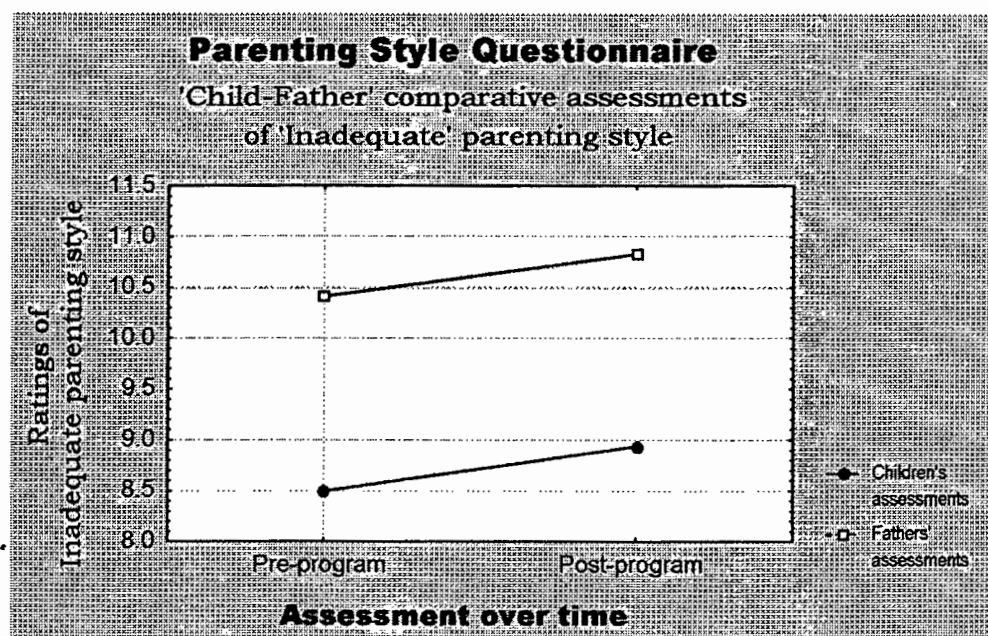
**Figure 22.** Means for 'Child-Father' comparative assessments of fathers' 'Overprotective' parenting style.

Results indicated that there was a main' source' effect for Child-Father' comparative assessments of fathers' 'Overprotective' parenting style. Children perceived their fathers to be significantly less overprotective than fathers perceived themselves to be

**Table 48.** Two-way repeated measures ANOVA results of comparative 'Child-Father' assessments of fathers' 'Inadequate' parenting style over time.

	df Effect	MS Effect	df Error	MS Error	F	p
Source (S) – 'Child-Father'	1	52.13	28	6.94	7.51	.01**
Time (T) – pre-program/post-program	1	2.67	28	.99	2.7	.11
Interaction - S x T	1	.002	28	.99	.002	.96

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ )



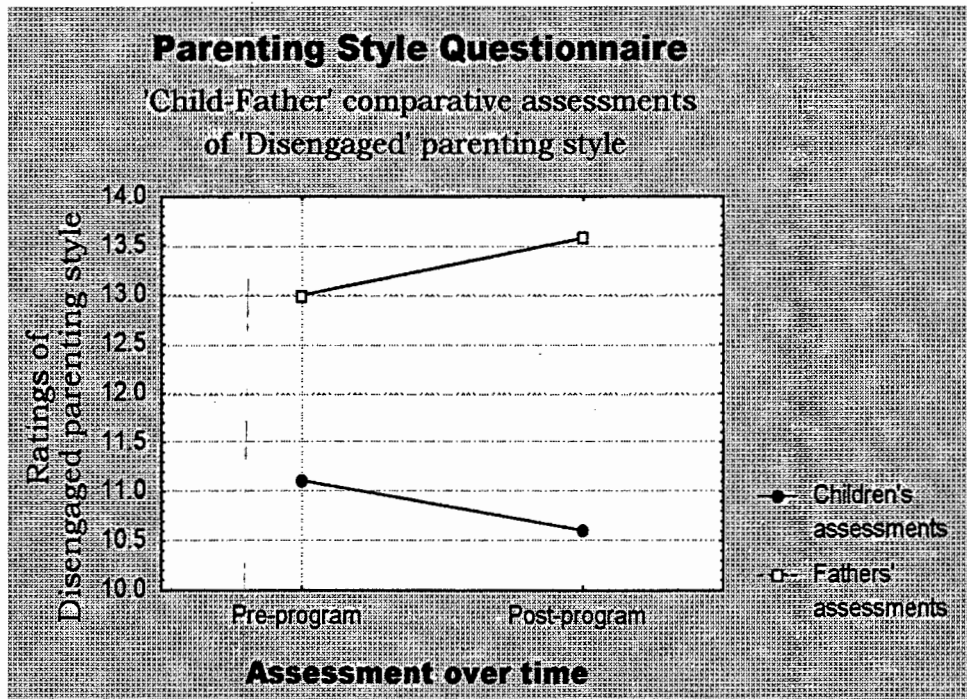
**Figure 23.** Means for 'Child-Father' comparative assessments of fathers' 'Inadequate' parenting style.

Results indicated that there was a statistically significant main 'source' effect, i.e. there was a significant difference between the way in which children assessed their fathers' 'Inadequate' parenting style and the way in which fathers assessed themselves ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ). Children perceived their fathers to be less inadequate, in other words, more adequate, than fathers assessed themselves to be. As with previous assessments of fathers' parenting styles where there has been a statistically significant main 'source' effect, there is once again a large discrepancy between fathers' and children's perception of the same parenting style.

**Table 49.** Two-way repeated measures ANOVA results comparative 'Child-Father' assessments of fathers' 'Disengaged' parenting style.

	df Effect	MS Effect	df Error	MS Error	F	p
Source (S) – 'Child-Father'	1	85.07	28	10.72	7.93	.009**
Time (T) – pre-program/post-program	1	.03	28	2.03	.01	.91
Interaction - S x T	1	4.23	28	2.03	2.09	.16

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ )



**Figure 24.** Means for 'Child-Father' comparative assessments of fathers' 'Disengaged' parenting style..

Results indicated that there was a statistically significant main 'source' effect ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ). Children perceived their fathers to be less disengaged than fathers perceived themselves to be. Although there was no statistically significant interaction effect, there was a similar interactive trend to that of 'Child-Father' comparative assessments for fathers' Critical parenting style: children perceived their fathers to become less disengaged during program intervention, whereas fathers perceived themselves to become more disengaged during the same time period.

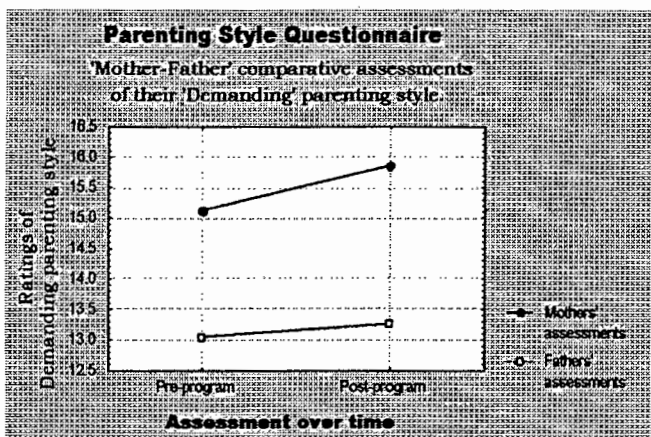


iv) Analysis 3: Detailed discussion of PSQ results for 'Mother-Father' comparative assessments over time.

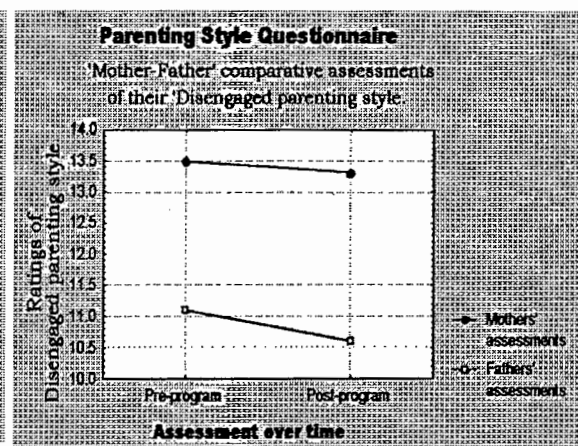
**Table 50.** Two-way repeated measures ANOVA results of 'Mother-Father' comparative assessments of their 'Demanding' parenting style.

	df Effect	MS Effect	df Error	MS Error	F	p
Source (S) – 'Mother-Father'	1	107.8	38	18.0	5.99	.02*
Time (T) – pre-program/post-program	1	4.46	38	8.73	.51	.48
Interaction - S x T	1	1.26	38	8.73	.14	.71

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ )



**Figure 25.** Means for 'Mother-Father' comparative assessments of their 'Demanding' parenting style.



**Figure 26.** Means for 'Mother-Father' comparative assessments of their 'Disengaged' parenting style.

**Table 51.** Two-way repeated measures ANOVA results of 'Mother-Father' comparative assessments of their 'Disengaged' parenting style.

	df Effect	MS Effect	df Error	MS Error	F	p
Source (S) – 'Mother-Father'	1	128.55	38	10.91	11.77	.001**
Time (T) – pre-program/post-program	1	2.30	38	2.68	.86	.36
Interaction - S x T	1	.50	38	2.68	.19	.67

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ ) Source = Mother-Father comparisons; Time = pre/post-program comparisons.

Results indicated that there were statistically significant main 'source' effects for 'Mother-Father' comparative assessments for their 'Demanding' and 'Disengaged' parenting styles. Children perceived their mothers to be more demanding and critical than they perceived their fathers to be.

## **Results of Quantitative Analysis**

### ***4.1.2. At the Ontogenetic level of Children's functioning***



### **The Junior Eysenck Personality Inventory (JEPI)**

This questionnaire was completed by 20 children at pre-program and post-program measurements. Research has shown that children's temperaments and levels of self-esteem are fairly fixed characteristics and do not change readily (Clarke-Stewart & Friedmann, 1987; Bynum & Durm, 1996). It was not anticipated that children's temperaments would change significantly during program intervention, so the JEPI was used as an assessment tool to validate this prediction, and as a measuring instrument to understand the temperamental orientation of the children who participated in CODIP.

Two types of analyses were conducted on JEPI ratings. In the first analysis three scatter plot diagrams were used to illustrate the pre-program and post-program 'Neuroticism/Extraversion' scores, and 'Social Desirability' scores, for each child who participated in CODIP. In the second analysis a two-way repeated measures ANOVA, with 'time' (pre-program/post-program) as the within subjects factor, and 'temperamental bias' (Extraversion/neuroticism) as the between subjects factor, was used.

#### **i) First analysis of JEPI scores.**

The first two scatter plot diagrams were used to illustrate into which character profile - 'High Extraversion/High Instability'; 'High Extraversion/Low Instability'; 'Low Extraversion/High Instability' and 'Low Extraversion/Low Instability' - each child was categorized. The first scatter plot diagram (Figure 27) illustrated children's 'Neuroticism/Extraversion' scores at the pre-program measurement. The second scatter plot diagram (Figure 28) illustrated children's 'Neuroticism/Extraversion' scores at the post-program measurement. The research question asked was whether children's temperamental orientation had changed significantly during program intervention? This question is statistically analyzed using a two-way repeated measures ANOVA in the second analysis of the JEPI ratings.

The cut-off points chosen to establish high/low Extraversion and Neuroticism quadrants were arbitrarily worked out through finding the mean of a number of sample norms established by Eysenck (1965) for 'Neuroticism', Extraversion' and 'Social Desirability' scores. Eysenck defined norms for each age group of children between the ages of seven and sixteen years, and for boys and girls separately. A normative mean, or cut off point, was established between high and low 'Extraversion' scores by attaining a combined mean for boys and girls in the eight to twelve year old age groups. The 'Extraversion' mean that was arbitrarily established through this method, was 17. A normative mean, or cut-off point, for 'Neuroticism' was established in the same way, but as there was quite a large discrepancy between norms for boys ( $M=11$ ) and girls ( $M=17$ ), two separate means were established for 'Neuroticism' scores.

Finally a third scatter plot diagram (Figure 29) is used to illustrate children's 'Lie/Social Desirability' scores. These results give an indication as to how reliable children's 'Neuroticism/Extraversion' ratings on the JEPI were likely to be. The normative mean for boys and girls for 'Social Desirability' ( $M=6$ ) was attained in the same way as for 'Extraversion' scores.

As results for the first JEPI analysis are presented as scatter plot diagrams there is no need for summarized results as would be typical in the section (ii) and (iii) format. To follow are detailed section (iv) results in scatter plot diagram format.

## iv) Detailed illustrations of scatter plot diagrams.

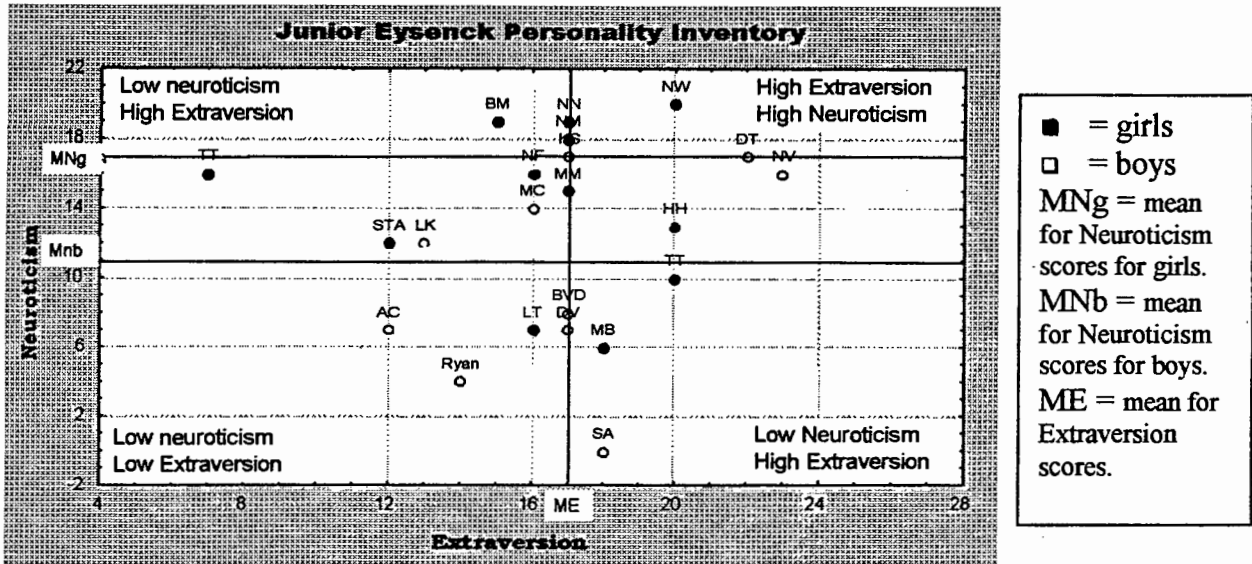


Figure 27. Children's pre-program assessments of 'Neuroticism' and 'Extraversion'.

At the pre-program assessment only three girls and three boys fell within the 'High Neuroticism/High Extraversion' category, and in the post-program assessment three of the same boys and two of the same girls had remained in this category despite program intervention. These children were exhibiting significant temperamental difficulties that may interfere with their post-divorce adjustment. Eysenck (1965) typically describes the characteristics of these children as being touchy, restless aggressive, excitable, changeable impulsive, optimistic and active.

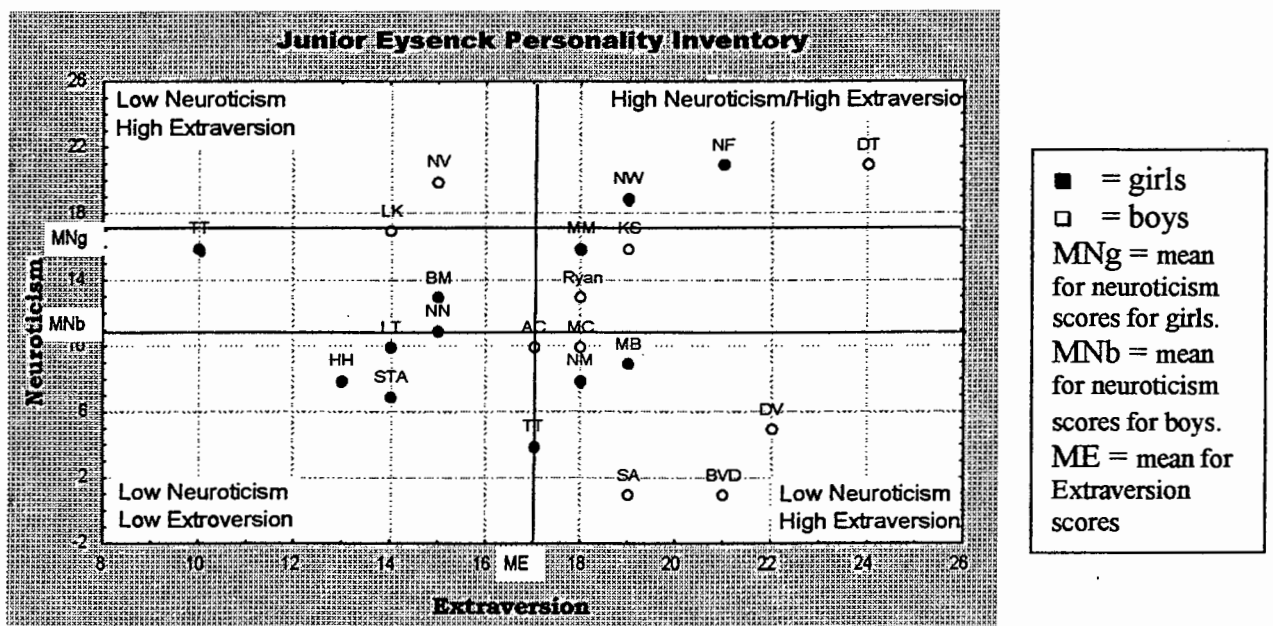


Figure 28. Children's post-program assessment of 'Neuroticism' and 'Extraversion' scores.

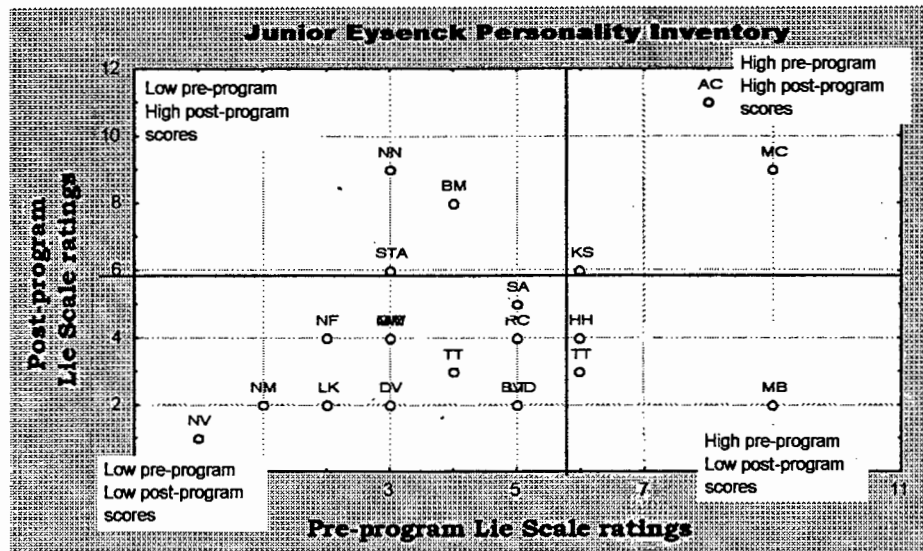


Figure 29. Children's pre-post program 'Lie/Social desirability' ratings.

Children's pre-post program ratings on the 'Lie/Social Desirability' scale were observed in order to more accurately ascertain how valid the self-reporting of each child was. The 'Lie' scale discriminates between which children need to *'fake good'* (Eysenck, 1965 p.14). Eysenck confesses that little is known about the 'Lie' scale therefore not too many statements about its function and validity can be made. Low 'Lie' scores however correlate more highly with the reliability of children's self-reporting in other areas of the scale. From the above scatter plot illustration it is apparent that most of the children (n=15) fell in the low pre-program/low post-program 'Lie/Social Desirability' quadrant, indicating higher validity and reliability of JEPI ratings of these children. Two children had high pre-post program scores, indicating that at both assessments of the JEPI, the responses to their self-rated questionnaires were not very accurate or reliable. Two other children had low pre-program/high post-program scores indicating that at the post-program assessment they were trying harder to please the raters, and their latter responses were less reliable than their first. One child had high pre-program/low post-program scores indicating that her post-program JEPI responses were more accurate. 75% of the children could be regarded as valid and reliable in their ratings.

i) Second analysis of JEPI scores.

A two-way repeated measures ANOVA, with 'time' (pre-program/post-program) as the within subjects factor, and 'temperament' as the between subjects factor, was used to statistically analyze the interaction between children's self-reported 'Neuroticism/Extraversion' scores over time. The research question asked was: *'Do children's 'Neuroticism/Extraversion' temperamental orientations change during program intervention'?* There were no summarized results as would be typically displayed in section (ii) and (iii) format. Detailed section (iv) results follow. They are presented in the following way: there is an initial table illustrating the two-way repeated measures ANOVA results and a graphical display illustrating the interaction between 'temperament' (Neuroticism/Extraversion) and 'time' (pre-program and post-program).

## iv) Detailed results of second JEPI analysis.

**Table 52.** Two-way repeated measures ANOVA results of children's self-reported 'Neuroticism/Extraversion' scores over time – pre-program and post-program.

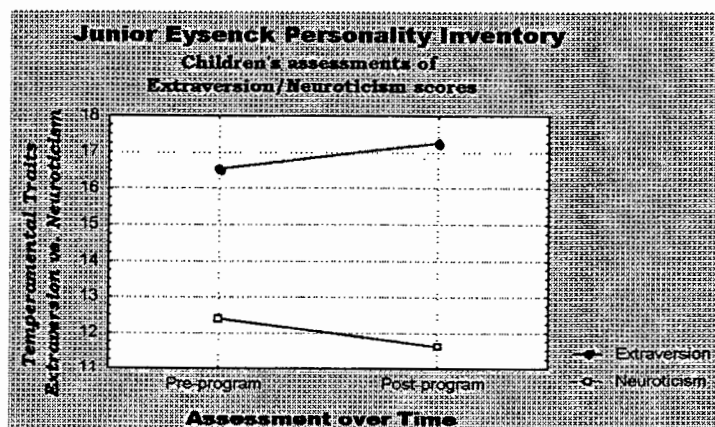
	df Effect	MS Effect	df Error	MS Error	F	p
Temperament – Neuroticism/Extraversion	1	525.28	42	36.34	14.46	.0005**
Time – pre-program/post-program	1	.01	42	9.43	.001	.97
Interaction – Temperament x Time	1	12.38	42	9.43	1.31	.26

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ )**Table 53.** LSD post-hoc test results.

		<i>Extraversion scores</i>		<i>Neuroticism scores</i>	
		Pre-program	Post-program	Pre-program	Post-program
Means		16.55	17.27	12.41	11.64
<i>Extraversion scores</i>	Prp		0.4	0.0006**	.000004**
	Pop	0.4		.000005**	.000001**
<i>Neuroticism scores</i>	Prp	.00007**	.000005**		.41
	Pop	.000004**	.000001**	0.41	

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ ) Prp = Pre-program, Pop = Post-program

Results indicated that there was a statistically significant 'temperament' effect at  $\alpha = 0.01$ . In other words there was a significant difference between children's neurotic and extraverted scores. This was to be expected as these characteristics are mutually exclusive. Post hoc test results indicated that there were no significant differences between these scores over time, i.e. the temperamental orientation of children who participated in CODIP remained unchanged during program intervention. This indicated, as predicted, that children's temperaments are a more permanent variable that is not altered by their participation in program intervention (Bynum & Durm, 1996; Clarke-Stewart & Friedman, 1987). The graphical display below illustrates these results.

**Figure 30.** Means indicating children's temperamental orientation over time.

### **The Child Rating Scale (CRS)**

This scale was completed by 28 children at pre-program and post-program measurements and by 18 children at a follow-up measurement. Pedro-Carroll and her colleagues used this questionnaire as an assessment tool in 1986 and 1989. Their results are compared to those of this study after section (iv) CRS results are discussed in detail. Four one-way repeated measures ANOVA analyses, with 'Time' (pre-program/post-program/follow-up) as the within subjects factor, were conducted for each CRS sub-section.

i) Statistical analysis used to assess CRS ratings.

A one-way repeated measures ANOVA, with 'Time' (pre-program/post-program/follow-up) as the within subjects factor, was the statistical tool of analysis used to assess whether any of the sub-scale factors- 'Rule Compliance', 'Anxiety/Withdrawal' behavior, 'Peer Social Skills' or 'School Interest' - changed over time. In other words did any of these areas of functioning change during program intervention, during the fifteen-month follow-up period thereafter, or during the combined time period that included program intervention and the fifteen months thereafter? These research questions asked were similar to those presented in the initial pages of this Results chapter (p.68/69). Summarized results to follow are presented in Table 54.

ii) Overall research results for the four CRS analyses.

**Table 54.** Summary of one-way repeated measures ANOVA results for all sub-sections of the Child Rating Scale over time –pre-program, post-program and follow-up.

<i>CRS Sub-sections</i>		M	df	F	p
<b><i>Rule Compliance</i></b>	Pre-program	14.47	2, 28	0.96	0.39
	Post-program	13.73			
	Follow-up	14.6			
<b><i>Anxiety/ Withdrawal</i></b>	Pre-program	10.13	2, 28	2.65	0.88
	Post-program	9.13			
	Follow-up	8.73			
<b><i>Peer Social Skills</i></b>	Pre-program	14.4	2, 28	4.54	0.02*
	Post-program	14.93			
	Follow-up	16.27			
<b><i>School Interest</i></b>	Pre-program	12.8	2, 28	0.82	0.45
	Post-program	13.8			
	Follow-up	13.6			

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ )

A summarized discussion of the above results follows.

iii) Summarized discussion of above CRS summarized results.

The above results indicated that children did not perceive their rule compliant behavior, their anxious/ withdrawn behavior or the level of their school interest to change significantly during program intervention or during the fifteen-month follow-up period thereafter. There was a statistically significant change in children's social skills ability with regard to their interaction with peers at  $\alpha = 0.05$ . This result is discussed further in section (iv). The statistically significant 'Peer Social Skills' result is presented in the following section (iv) format: initially there is a table of one-way repeated measures ANOVA results, followed by a second table of LSD post-hoc test results, and finally there is a graphical display indicating how Peer Social Skills change over time.



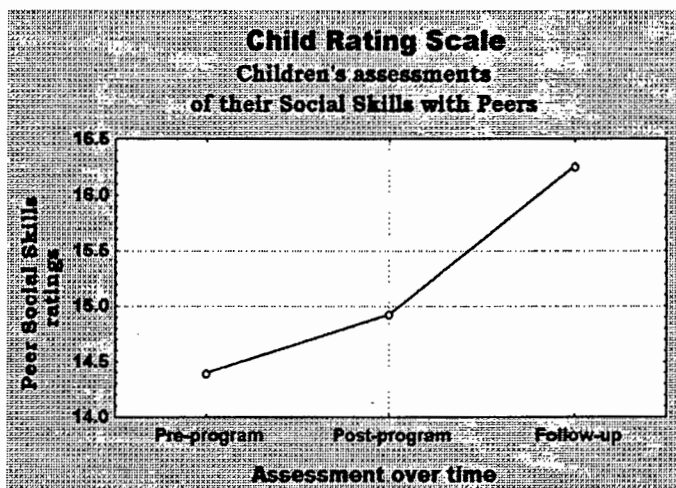
iv) Detailed discussion of significant CRS result.**Table 55.** One-way repeated measures ANOVA results of children's assessment of their 'Peer Social Skill'.

df	MS	df	MS		
Effect	Effect	Error	Error	F	p-level
2	13.87	28	3.06	4.54	.02*

**Table 56.** LSD post-hoc results.

	Pre-program 14.4	Post-program 14.93	Follow-up 16.27
Means			
Pre-program		.41	.007**
Post-program	.41		.05*
Follow-up	.007**	.05*	

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ )

**Figure 31.** Means of children's ratings of peer sociability over time.

Results indicated that children participating in the Children of Divorce Intervention Program felt that their social skills ability towards their peers within the classroom setting had changed significantly over the different time measurements at  $\alpha = 0.05$ . Post-hoc test results indicated that there were statistically significant differences between means 1 (pre-program) and 3 (follow-up), and between means 2 (post-program) and 3 (follow-up). Thus it appears that children rated their peer social skills to have improved significantly in the fifteen months after program intervention, and to have improved overall, during the eighteen-month period of time that included program intervention and the fifteen-month follow-up period. It may be that social skills that developed through group interaction during CODIP participation, were further consolidated in the fifteen month follow-up period thereafter

**Research results of this study compared to those of Pedro-Carroll and her colleagues.**

The Child Rating Scale was used by Pedro-Carroll, Cowen, Hightower and Guare in 1986 and 1989. The statistical analyses conducted used repeated measures ANOVAs as the statistical tool of analysis at pre-program and pre-/post-program assessments.

The first statistical analysis conducted at the pre-program assessment was to compare CRS ratings of different subject groups. The research question asked was whether children's behavioral adjustment within the classroom, as defined by the four CRS subscales, was the same for each sample group. In 1986 an experimental group of 54 children from divorced families was compared to a comparison group of 78 demographically matched children from intact families. In 1989 three sample groups were compared. The children in these groups were in their second and third grade and were of a lower socio-economic status than the fourth to sixth grade children in the 1986 subject groups. In 1989 an experimental group of 52 children from divorced families was compared to a divorce control group of 52 children from divorced families who were not participating in CODIP, and an intact comparison group of 81 children from intact families.

The 1986 and 1989 pre-program analyses had different results. The 1986 pre-program MANOVA results indicated that there were statistically significant differences between the experimental and the comparison group at  $\alpha = 0.01$ . One-way repeated measures ANOVA results indicated that these differences were significant for rule compliance, and peer sociability at  $\alpha = 0.05$ , and for anxious/withdrawn behavior and school interest at  $\alpha = 0.01$ . In other words, children from divorced families were less compliant, less sociable, less interested in school and more anxious at the pre-program measurement. In 1989 one-way repeated measures ANOVA results indicated no statistically significant differences between groups at the pre-program comparison ( $F = 0.93$ ,  $df = 8, 326$ ,  $p < 0.07$ ).

In the pre-/post-program analysis a two-way repeated measures ANOVA was used, with one between subjects factor, 'Condition' (experimental/divorce control/intact comparison groups) and one within subjects factor, 'Time' (pre-program/post-program). The research question asked was whether there had been a change in the classroom behavior of children who were in the experimental groups, as compared to the classroom behavior of children in the divorce control and intact comparison groups during program intervention. In other words, did a difference in the classroom behavior of children participating in CODIP bring them any closer to the standard of behavior of children from intact families? Pre-post program differences in scores (pre-post change scores) were collected for each group, and compared.

The 1986 MANOVA results indicated that there was a significant difference in the pre-post change scores for the experimental group compared to the comparison group at  $\alpha = 0.01$ . One-way repeated measures ANOVA results on CRS sub-sections scores however, indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between groups. This indicates that in terms of overall behavioral adjustment within the classroom there were no differences between children of divorced parents and those children from intact families. These results may indicate that as a result of children's participation in CODIP their behavioral adaptation within the classroom so improved, that they were now comparable to children from intact families, who did not have to deal with the life stressor of divorce.

In 1989 pre-post change score comparisons between the experimental, the divorce control or the intact comparison groups indicated there were no statistically significant differences between these groups for overall CRS scores, or CRS sub-section scores. This indicates that there was no difference between children of divorced parents who had participated in CODIP, children of divorced parents who had not as yet participated in the program, and children from intact families. These results indicated that although there had been an improvement in the behavior of the children of divorced parents (experimental group) during program intervention; there had also been a behavioral improvement in the children of divorced parents who had not as yet participated in

CODIP. Results that previously indicated an improvement in children's behavior possibly due to their participation in CODIP (Pedro-Carroll et al., 1986) were now being confounded by the fact that children of divorced parents who did not participate in CODIP (divorce control group) had also improved in their behavioral adjustment over time. The behavioral improvement of the latter group may have been due to normal adjustment that seems to occur naturally over the time trajectory of the divorce process (Wallerstein, 1987).

In summary the results of Pedro-Carroll and Cowen are comparable to current research results in the following ways:

- The research subjects are of a similar age;
- Similar statistical procedures were used. Analyses were conducted across subsections for both studies.

Research results of this study were noticeably different to those of Pedro-Carroll et al. for the following reasons:

- Characteristics of research subjects assessed by Pedro-Carroll and her colleagues were more clearly defined in terms of their socio-economic status and demographic characteristics; whereas characteristics of current research subjects were a more diffuse combination of socioeconomic status (lower and middle-class), and cultural groupings.
- Different research designs were used. In this study there was no inclusion in the research design of a delayed treatment comparison group or an intact family comparison group as a control.

Current research results indicated that the peer sociability skills of children who participated in CODIP increased during the fifteen-month follow-up period after program completion, and in the overall eighteen-month time period that included program intervention and the time thereafter. These results may indicate that emotional issues dealt with and coping skills taught during program intervention facilitated children's post-divorce adjustment in the follow-up period thereafter. These results concur most

closely with Pedro-Carroll et al.'s 1989 research results that indicated children's behavioral adjustment within the classroom improved, not only as a result of program intervention, but as a result of the normal adjustment that occurs during the time trajectory of the divorce process.

### **Children's Beliefs about Parental Divorce Scale (CBAPS)**

The Children's Beliefs About Parental Divorce Scale was used as an assessment tool in this study to validate whether programs like the Children of Divorce Intervention Program lead to changes in children's social cognition as suggested by Kurdek and Berg (1987). This scale however, was not used as an assessment tool by Pedro-Carroll and her colleagues in their research. This scale was completed by 28 children at pre-program, post-program and follow-up measurements.

A one-way repeated measures ANOVA, with 'Time' (pre-program/post-program/follow-up) as the within subjects factor, was used to statistically analyze all CBAPS sub-section ratings.

#### **i) Statistical analysis used to assess CBAPS ratings.**

A one-way repeated measures ANOVA, with 'Time' (pre-program/post-program/follow-up) as the within subjects factor, was the statistical tool of analysis used to assess whether any of the sub-scale factors- 'Peer Ridicule and Avoidance'; 'Paternal Blame'; 'Fear of Abandonment'; 'Maternal Blame'; 'Hope of Reunification' and 'Self-Blame' - changed over time. In other words, did any of these child-rated factors change during program intervention, during the fifteen-month follow-up period thereafter, or during the combined time period that included program intervention and the fifteen months thereafter? These research questions are similar to those presented in the initial pages of this Results chapter (p.68/69). Summarized results to follow are presented in Table 57.

ii) Summarized research results for CBAPS analysis.

**Table 57.** Summary of one-way repeated measures ANOVA results for all CBAPS sub-sections over time – pre-program, post-program and follow-up

<i>Sub-scales</i>		<i>M</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
<i>Peer Ridicule and Avoidance</i>	Pre-program	1.85	2,24	9.88	0.0007**
	Post-program	0.92			
	Follow-up	0.54			
<i>Fear of Abandonment</i>	Pre-program	0.92	2,24	5.1	0.01**
	Post-program	0.38			
	Follow-up	0.08			
<i>Hope of Parental Reunification</i>	Pre-program	2.54	2,24	4.67	0.02*
	Post-program	1.62			
	Follow-up	0.85			
<i>Paternal Blame</i>	Pre-program	1.62	2,24	0.32	0.73
	Post-program	1.62			
	Follow-up	1.38			
<i>Maternal Blame</i>	Pre-program	1.0	2,24	3.2	0.06
	Post-program	0.31			
	Follow-up	0.54			
<i>Self-Blame</i>	Pre-program	1.46	2,24	1.13	0.34
	Post-program	0.85			
	Follow-up	1.38			

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ )

iii) Summarized discussion of CBAPS results.

It can be seen from results in Table 57 that statistically significant differences over time were recorded for 'Peer Ridicule and Avoidance' and for 'Fear of Abandonment' at  $\alpha = 0.01$ , and for 'Hope of Parental Reunification' at  $\alpha = 0.05$ . Detailed LSD post-hoc test results in section (iv) to follow, indicated that differences in 'Peer Ridicule and Avoidance' occurred during program intervention ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ). Statistically significant differences for all three sub-sections - 'Peer Ridicule and Avoidance', 'Hope of Parental Reunification' and 'Fear of Abandonment' – occurred during the overall time period that included program intervention and the fifteen months thereafter at  $\alpha = 0.01$ .

Many children in middle childhood have the perception that they are responsible for their parents' divorce/separation (Wallerstein, 1983). Thus, it is of note that there were no statistically significant differences recorded for the three sub-scales measuring 'attribution of blame'. Children did not perceive themselves, or either parent, to be more blameworthy than the other for the 'divorce/separation' event.

Kurdek and Berg (1987) correlated their CBAPS results for 'attribution of blame' with 'family structure', and found that children in mother and stepfather family structures attributed more paternal blame for the divorce/separation event, than did children who were in father-custody families.

Where statistically significant results are indicated in Table 57, and in the summarized discussion above, they are illustrated in detail in section (iv). Results are presented in the following way: there is an initial table of one-way repeated measures ANOVA results; a second table of LSD post hoc test results; and finally there is a graphical display of means indicating changes in 'fear of peer avoidance and ridicule', 'fear of parental abandonment' and 'hope of parental reunification', over time.



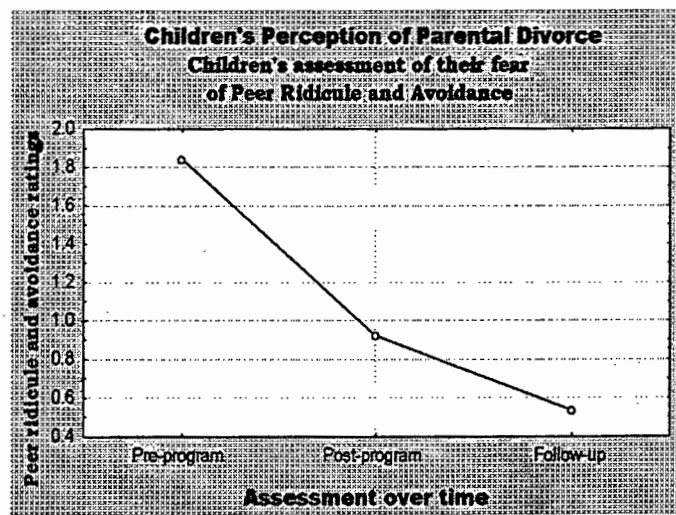
iv) Detailed discussion of statistically significant CBAPS results.**Table 59.** One-way repeated measures ANOVA results of children's assessment of 'Peer Ridicule and Avoidance'.

df	MS	df	MS		
Effect	Effect	Error	Error	F	p-level
2	5.87	24	.59	9.88	.0007**

**Table 60.** LSD post-hoc results.

	Pre-program	Post-program	Follow-up
Means	1.85	.92	.54
Pre-program		.005**	.0002**
Post-program	.005**		.22
Follow-up	.0002**	.22	

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ )

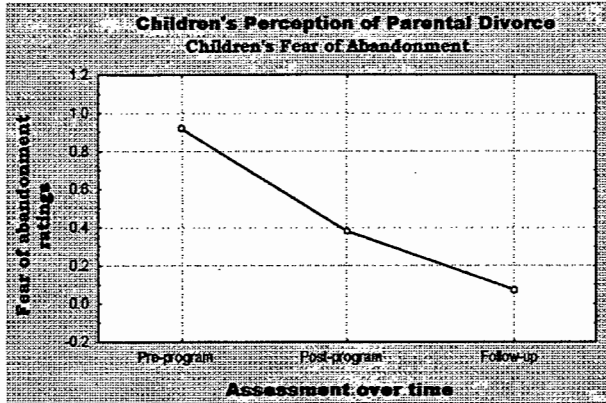
**Figure 33.** Means of children's CBAPS ratings of 'Peer Ridicule and Avoidance' over time.

Results indicated that children participating in CODIP felt that their fear of peer ridicule and avoidance had changed significantly over the different time measurements ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ). Post-hoc test results indicated that there were statistically significant differences between means 1 (pre-program) and 2 (post-program), and between means 1 (pre-program) and 3 (follow-up) at  $\alpha = 0.01$ . Thus it appears that children's fear of peer ridicule and avoidance decreased during program intervention, and in the combined time period that included program intervention and the fifteen months thereafter. These findings are important because children's fears in this area may prevent them from accessing a very important source of social support – their peers (Kurdek & Berg, 1987).

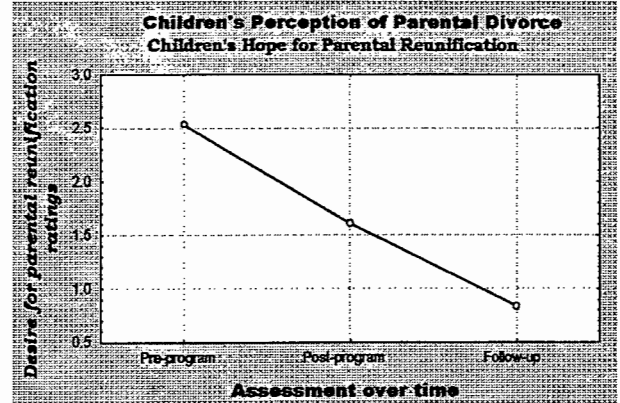
**Table 61.** One-way repeated measures ANOVA results of children's 'Fear of Parental Abandonment'.

df	MS	df	MS		
Effect	Effect	Error	Error	F	p-level
2	2.39	24	.47	5.1	.01**

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ )

**Figure 34.** Means for children's 'Fear of Abandonment'**Table 62.** LSD post-hoc test results.

	Pre-program	Post-program	Follow-up
Pre-program	.92	.38	.08
Post-program	.06		.26
Follow-up	.004**	.26	

**Figure 35.** Means for Children's 'Hope of Parental Reunification'.**Table 63.** One-way repeated measures ANOVA results of children's 'Hope of Parental Reunification'.

df	MS	df	MS		
Effect	Effect	Error	Error	F	p-level
2	9.33	24	2.0	4.67	.02*

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ )

**Table 64.** LSD post-hoc test results.

	Pre-program	Post-program	Follow-up
Means	2.54	1.62	.85
Pre-program		.11	.005**
Post-program	.11		.18
Follow-up	.005**	.18	

Results indicated that children participating in CODIP felt that their fear of parental abandonment ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ) and their hope for parental reunification ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) had changed significantly over the different time measurements. Post-hoc test results indicated that there were statistically significant differences between means 1 (pre-program) and 3 (follow-up) at  $\alpha = 0.01$ . Thus it appears that over the combined time period of program intervention and the fifteen months thereafter, children's fear of parental abandonment, and their hope for parental reunification, decreased significantly.

The results, indicating children's decreased fear of parental abandonment during program intervention, may have important implications in the light of findings by Visher and Visher (1983) that children's fear in this area may be linked to their perception that any new step-parent may be supplanting their non-custodial biological parent. Seven of the twenty-eight children who participated in CODIP lived in reconstituted families with a mother and a stepfather. The fact that 'fear of abandonment' decreased may be an indication that for some of these children there may be a more integrated social cognition that they can have a meaningful relationship with a stepparent and a non-custodial parent, without the one parent replacing the other.

### **The Parent Evaluation Form (PEF)**

The Parent Evaluation Form was completed by nineteen mothers, eight fathers, three stepfathers and three stepmothers at the pre-program measurement; by sixteen mothers, ten fathers, three stepfathers and three stepmothers at the post-program measurement; and by fourteen mothers, six fathers and two stepfathers at the follow-up measurement.

Research results are recorded on the following pages, and are compared with research results attained by Pedro-Carroll and her colleagues.

#### **ii) Statistical procedure used to analyze PEF results.**

A two-way repeated measures ANOVA, with 'Time' (pre-program/post-program/follow-up) as the within subjects factor, and 'Parent' (mother/father) as the between subjects factor was used to analyze PEF results. The research question asked was whether there were any significant differences between PEF sum scores, as assessed by mothers and fathers, over time.

As there is only one analytic procedure there is no need for results to be summarized in the normal section (ii) and (iii) format. To follow are detailed section (iv) results that are displayed in an initial two-way repeated measures ANOVA table, followed by a second LSD post hoc test results table, and finally a graphical illustration of mothers' and fathers' PEF ratings over time.

## iv) Detailed discussion of statistically significant PEF results.

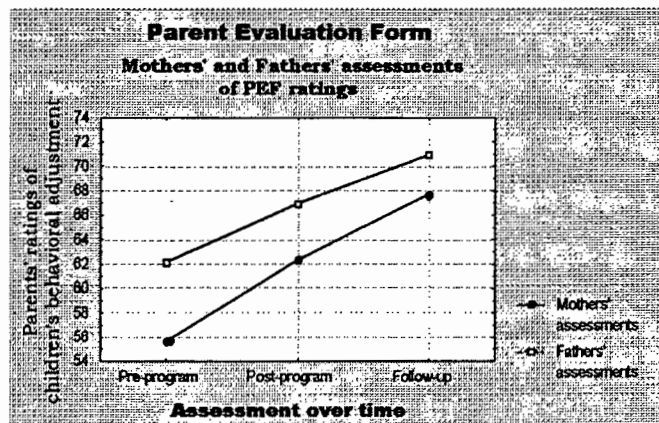
**Table 66.** Two-way repeated measures ANOVA results of mothers' and fathers' PEF ratings over time – pre-program, post-program and follow-up.

df Effect	MS Effect	df Error	MS Error	F	p-level
Parent (P) – mother/father	227.21	13	72.30	3.14	.10
Time (T) – pre-program/post-program/follow-up	365.23	26	63.58	5.74	.009**
Interaction – P x T	9.14	26	63.58	.144	.87

**Table 67.** LSD post hoc test results of mothers' and fathers' PEF ratings.

		<i>Mothers' assessments</i>			<i>Fathers' assessments</i>		
		Pre-program	Post-program	Follow-up	Pre-program	Post-program	Follow-up
Mothers' assessments	Means	55.70	62.40	67.80	62.20	67.0	71.0
	Prp		.07	.002**	.149	.02*	.001**
	Pop	.07		.14	.10	.30	.06
	Fup	.002**	.14		.21	.86	.47
Fathers' assessments	Prp	.149	.10	.21		.35	.09
	Pop	.02*	.30	.86	.35		.43
	Fup	.001**	.06	.47	.09	.43	

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ ) Prp = pre-program; Pop = post-program; Fup = follow-up

**Figure 36.** Means of parents' assessments of children's behavioral adjustment over time.

Results indicated that there was a statistically significant 'time' effect for mothers' and fathers' assessments of PEF ratings over time. LSD post-hoc test results indicated statistically significant differences for mothers', but not fathers' assessments, between means 1 (pre-program) and 3 (post-program). Mothers assessed that their children's behavioral adjustment improved during the cumulative time period that included program intervention and the fifteen-month follow-up period thereafter.

### **Research results compared to those of Pedro-Carroll and her colleagues.**

The Parent Evaluation Form was used by Pedro-Carroll and her colleagues (1986, 1989 & 1992) in their research. Their results showed similar trends across all studies, although different research designs were used.

In a 1986 replication study 54 children from divorced families (the experimental group) who participated in CODIP were compared to 78 demographically matched children (the comparison group) from intact families. These children were all from the suburban areas of New York and they were in their fourth to sixth grade. In the 1989 study three groups of children were compared. The children were in their second and third grade at school and were from families who had lower socio-economic status. The three groups were composed of 52 children of divorced parents (experimental group), 52 children of divorced parents who did not participate in CODIP (divorce control group), and 81 children from intact families (intact comparison group). In 1992 similar subject groups of the same lower socio-economic status were compared. These children were in their fourth to sixth grade at school. There were 57 CODIP participants in the experimental group who were compared to 38 non-program divorce controls and 93 children from non-divorced families.

Pre-program and pre-/post-program analyses used repeated measures ANOVAs as the statistical tool of analysis. The pre-program analysis revealed that there were statistically significant differences between the experimental group and other comparison/control groups ( $F=8.91$ ,  $p<0.01$ ;  $F=8.45$ ,  $p<0.01$ ;  $F=5.0$ ,  $p<0.01$  for 1986, 1989 and 1992 studies respectively). (Degrees of freedom were not given in the original journal articles). The post-program analysis evidenced that pre-/post-program change scores were not statistically significant between groups, as they had been at the pre-program measurement, owing to the improved behavioral adjustment of the experimental group. There were statistically significant differences between pre-program and post-program measurements of the experimental group ( $F=6.87$ ,  $p<0.01$ ;  $F=11.12$ ,  $p<0.01$ ;  $F=15.88$ ;  $p<0.01$  for 1986, 1989 and 1992 studies respectively).

Overall current research results are similar to those of Pedro-Carroll and her colleagues in that improvements in children's adjustment, as assessed by parents, were noted for children who participated in CODIP. The results of this study however differed in the following ways:

- i) Only mothers, and not fathers, noted post-program adjustment improvements of children who participated in CODIP.
- ii) In the current study a fifteen-month follow-up assessment was conducted as well as assessing changes in PEF ratings during program intervention.
- iii) The behavioral adjustment of children who participated in CODIP did not improve significantly during program intervention as research results of Pedro-Carroll et al. (1986, 1989 & 1992) indicated, but improved during the combined time period that included program intervention and the fifteen months thereafter. These research results imply that improvements in behavioral adjustment may occur not only during program intervention, but also during the normal post-divorce adjustment process that is facilitated with the passing of time.
- iv) There were no control groups in the current study.

### **The Rutters Adjustment Scale (RAS)**

The Rutters Adjustment Scale was rated by nineteen mothers, eight fathers, three stepfathers and three stepmothers in the pre-program situation; by sixteen mothers, ten fathers, three stepfathers and three stepmothers in the post-program situation; and by fourteen mothers, six fathers and two stepfathers at the follow-up measurement.

One analysis was conducted on RAS ratings using a two-way repeated measures ANOVA as the statistical tool of analysis. A description of this analysis follows.

#### **i) Description of statistical analysis used for RAS ratings.**

A two-way repeated measures ANOVA, with 'Time' (pre-program/post-program/follow-up) as the within subjects factor, and 'Parent' (mother/father) as the between subjects factor, was used as the tool of analysis. The research question asked was whether ratings of any RAS sub-section changed over time. In other words do any changes occur in children's 'Health', their 'Habits' or their 'Behavioral Maladjustment' during program intervention, in the fifteen-month follow-up period, or in the combined time period that includes program intervention and the fifteen months thereafter? A summary of these results are presented in Table 68 and Table 69.



ii) Summary of RAS research results.

**Table 68.** Two-way repeated measures ANOVA df, F and p results of parents' assessments of children's 'Health', 'Habits' and 'Behavioral Maladjustment' over time.

		<i>Health</i>			<i>Habits</i>			<i>Behavioral Maladjustment</i>		
		Df	F	p	df	F	p	df	F	p
<b><i>Mothers' and Fathers' assessments</i></b>	Parent (P) – mother/father	1, 17	0.23	0.64	1, 15	0.002	0.97	1, 16	8.35	0.01**
	Time (T)	2, 34	2.16	0.13	2,30	0.63	0.46	2, 32	1.25	0.30
	Interaction – P x T	2,34	0.26	0.77	2,30	0.63	0.46	2, 32	2.93	0.07

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ ) Time = pre-program/post-program/follow-up measurements

**Table 69.** Two-way repeated measures ANOVA Mean results of parents' assessments of children's 'Health', 'Habits' and 'Behavioral Maladjustment' over time.

		<i>Pre-program</i>	<i>Post-program</i>	<i>Follow-up</i>
<b><i>Mother' assessments</i></b>	<i>Health</i>	3.0	2.9	2.09
	<i>Habits</i>	1.19	0.64	0.64
	<i>Behavioral Maladjustment</i>	12.25	10.92	8.83
<b><i>Fathers' assessments</i></b>	<i>Health</i>	3.5	3.0	2.75
	<i>Habits</i>	0.83	0.67	1.0
	<i>Behavioral Maladjustment</i>	5.5	4.5	6.17

iii) A summarized discussion of the RAS results.

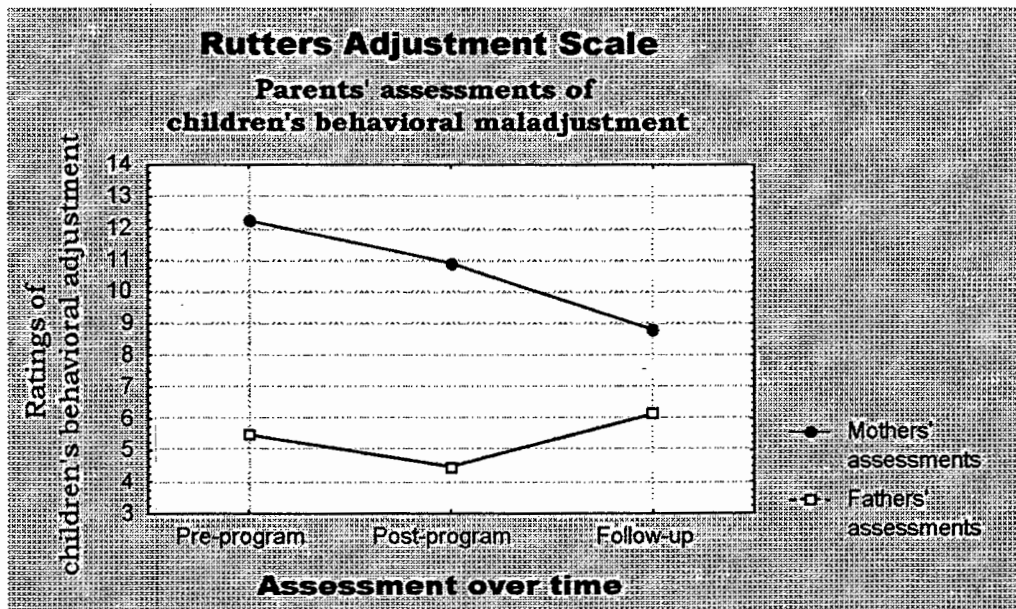
There was a statistically significant 'parent' effect for mothers' and fathers' assessments of their children's levels of 'behavioral maladjustment' over time, at  $\alpha = 0.01$ .

A detailed discussion of this statistically significant result is reported on the following page. The results are presented in the normal format of an initial one-way repeated measures ANOVA table, followed by a graphical display of mothers' and fathers' assessments of 'behavioral maladjustment' over time. No table of LSD post hoc test results are necessary as only two independent variables are being compared for the 'parent' effect.

iv) Detailed discussion of statistically significant RAS result.**Table 70.** Two-way repeated measures ANOVA results of mothers' and fathers' assessments of children's behavioral maladjustment.

df Effect	MS Effect	df Error	MS Error	F	p-level
Parent (P) – mother/father	334.26	16	40.02	8.35	.01**
Time (T)	8.79	32	7.01	1.25	.30
Interaction – P x T	20.569	32	7.01	2.93	.07

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ ) Time = pre-program/post-program/follow-up measurements

**Figure 37.** Means of mothers' and fathers' assessments of children's behavioral maladjustment.

Results indicated that there was a statistically significant 'parent' effect for mothers' and fathers' assessments of children's behavioral maladjustment over time. Mothers experienced their children to be more maladjusted than fathers experienced the same children to be. According to mothers' and fathers' assessments behavioral maladjustment did not change significantly during program intervention or the fifteen-month follow-up period thereafter.

### **The Teacher-Child Rating Scale (T-CRS)**

The Teacher - Child Rating Scale was completed by twenty teachers at pre-program and post-program measurements. This scale was also used by Pedro-Carroll and her colleagues in their research (1986, 1989 and 1992). The statistical tool used to analyze these pre-post program results was a dependent t-test.

#### **i) Statistical analysis for T-CRS ratings.**

A dependent t-test was used as the statistical tool of analysis to independently assess T-CRS sub-sections, as well as part one 'problematic behavior' scores and part two 'competency skills' scores, over time – pre-program and post-program. The research question asked was whether factor scores in each sub-section, and sum scores for each part, changed during program intervention. A summary of T-CRS sum and factor scores is presented in Table 71.

ii) Summary of T-CRS research results.**Table 71.** Dependent t-test results for teachers' pre-post-program assessments of children's functioning within the classroom.

<b>Part one – Children's 'Problem' behaviors</b>			
<b>Sub Sections</b>		<b>Pre-program</b>	<b>Post-program</b>
<b>Acting Out behavior</b>	M	10.85	12.15
	SD	4.69	4.51
	t	-1.58	
	p	0.13	
<b>Shy/Anxious behavior</b>	M	12.9	11.8
	SD	5.33	5.5
	t	1.18	
	p	0.25	
<b>Learning Skills</b>	M	14.05	12.45
	SD	6.17	5.63
	t	1.49	
	p	0.15	
<b>Summed 'Problem' scores</b>	M	37.4	36.4
	SD	10.7	8.9
	t	0.46	
	p	0.65	
<b>Part Two – Children's 'Competency' scores</b>			
<b>Frustration Tolerance</b>	M	15.2	15.2
	SD	3.7	4.03
	t	0.0	
	p	1.0	
<b>Assertive Social Skills</b>	M	15.09	14.57
	SD	5.09	5.74
	t	0.59	
	p	0.56	
<b>Task orientation</b>	M	15.2	14.5
	SD	5.2	5.37
	t	0.9	
	p	0.38	
<b>Peer Social Skills</b>	M	15.55	14.75
	SD	5.87	5.0
	t	1.07	
	p	0.3	
<b>Summed 'Competency' scores</b>	M	61.35	60.75
	SD	15.37	14.34
	t	-0.27	
	p	0.79	

A discussion of these summarized results follows.

iii) Summarized discussion of T-CRS results above.

As can be seen from the summarized results in Table 71, there were no statistically significant differences between pre-post program sum or factor scores for part one: children's 'problematic behavior' scores; or part two: children's 'competency' scores. In order to have an understanding of how problematic the behavior of children participating in CODIP was, or how competent they were, research results were converted into percentages. This was achieved by calculating a grand mean for pre-program and post-program summed scores for 'problematic behavior' and 'competency skills' independently. A percentage was obtained by comparing this grand mean to the highest summated part one and part two scores that a child could have been rated. It seems that children participating in CODIP had a 'problematic behavior' average of 41% and a 'competence' average of 61%. From these rough calculations it appears that teachers did not perceive these children as being too problematic, and they perceived them as having above average competency skills. Thus it appears that although children's 'competency skills' (frustration tolerance, assertive social skills, task orientation or peer social skills) and their 'problematic behaviors' (acting out behavior, shy/anxious behavior or their learning problems) did not change during program intervention, teachers felt that these children were fairly well adjusted anyway.

As there are no statistically significant T-CRS results, they are not discussed in detail in section (iv). To follow is a comparison of these results with those attained by Pedro-Carroll and her colleagues when they used the T-CRS scale in their 1986, 1989 and 1992 research.

### **Research results compared to those of Pedro-Carroll and her colleagues.**

As the research design, subject group comparisons, and statistical analysis procedures have already been outlined when discussing Pedro-Carroll et al.'s PEF and CRS research findings, they will not be as extensively detailed for the T-CRS results.

For all three studies, MANOVAs and ANOVAS were the statistical tools of analysis. T-CRS ratings of experimental and comparison groups were compared at pre-program and pre-/post-program assessments. At the 1986 pre-program assessment a one-way repeated measures ANOVA, with 'Condition' (experimental/delayed control/intact group comparisons) as the between subjects factor, was conducted. At the pre-/post-program assessments in 1986, 1989 and 1992, a two-way repeated measures ANOVA was used, with 'Time' (pre-program/post-program) as the within subjects factor, and 'Condition' as the between subjects factor.

The results attained for the pre-program assessment in 1986 indicated that all univariate  $F$ 's for the MANOVA ( $F=5.19$ ) and the following sub-sections – 'Shy/Anxious' ( $F=6.79$ ), 'Learning Skills' ( $F=12.14$ ), 'Frustration Tolerance' ( $F=19.01$ ), 'Task Orientation' ( $F=16.89$ ) and 'Adaptive Assertiveness' ( $F=25.40$ ) were all statistically significant at  $\alpha = 0.01$ . The only sub-section that did not show a statistically significant difference between the experimental and comparison groups was 'Acting Out' behavior ( $F=1.05$ ). At this stage there was no 'competency' sub-scale for 'Peer social Skills'. (Degrees of freedom were not quoted in original results.) Thus 1986 pre-program results (Pedro-Carroll, Cowen, Hightower & Guare) indicated that children in the experimental group were more shy, had fewer learning skills, poorer frustration tolerance, fewer task orientation skills and less adaptive assertiveness than the intact comparison group. In 1992 pre-program T-CRS results, the experimental group was found to have significantly more problems,  $F(5, 168) = 4.65$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , and fewer competencies,  $F(5, 168) = 6.09$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , than the delayed control or intact comparison groups.

Pre-post program assessments in 1986, 1989 and 1992 revealed the following results: In 1986 pre-post program comparisons indicated statistically significant differences in the following sub-sections – ‘Shy/Anxious’ behavior, ( $F=4.83$ ,  $p<0.03$ ); ‘Frustration Tolerance’ ( $F=5.67$ ,  $p<0.02$ ), and ‘Adaptive Assertiveness’ ( $F=5.63$ ,  $p<0.02$ ). (Once again degrees of freedom were not quoted in the original research presentation.) In 1989 the MANOVA results for sum scores of the Condition (experimental/delayed control/intact group comparisons)  $\times$  Time (pre-program/post-program) analysis was only statistically significant for ‘competence’ scores and not for ‘problem behavior’ scores. The ‘time’ effect for the competence total was only significant for the experimental (CODIP participants) group,  $F(1, 167) = 21.94$ ,  $p<0.001$ . Univariate simple effects for ‘time’ showed the following statistically significant gains for the experimental group on all ‘competence’ factors – ‘Frustration Tolerance’,  $F(1, 167) = 10.64$ ,  $p<0.001$ ; ‘Assertiveness’,  $F(1, 167) = 26.01$ ,  $p<0.001$ ; ‘Task Orientation’,  $F(1, 167) = 7.41$ ,  $p<0.01$ ; ‘Peer Social Skills’,  $F(1, 167) = 15.96$ ,  $p<0.001$ . Univariate simple effects for ‘time’ showed a statistically significant gain for the divorce control group only for the ‘Assertiveness’ factor,  $F(1, 167) = 5.22$ ,  $p<0.001$ . These 1989 results indicated that children in the experimental group, who participated in CODIP, had improved significantly in terms of their ‘competence’ skills, as assessed by their teachers.

The 1992 pre-post-program assessment results indicated a directional trend that was not statistically significant. The trend was that the experimental group had improved in competency skills, and decreased in problem behaviors.

Research results of this study were most similar to the 1992 research findings of Pedro-Carroll and her colleagues, in that although there were trends that indicated an improvement in competence and problem behavior scores, these were not statistically significant. They differed from 1986, and 1989 results that indicated children who had been involved in CODIP had significantly improved with regards to the level of competency they were exhibiting in their post-program behavior.

Three out of the four CODIP groups in the current research were conducted outside of the school setting. There was only one group program that operated within a school setting. Pedro-Carroll and her colleagues only conducted CODIP groups within school settings with the co-operation of the teachers concerned. It may be queried whether the ratings of teachers in the studies conducted by Pedro-Carroll et al. (1986, 1989 & 1992) were influenced by the vested interest they had in the success of the program.



### **The Group Leaders Evaluation Form (GLEF).**

The GLEF was rated by the leader (rater 1) and co-leader (rater 2) of each group program. There were four CODIP groups conducted for this study. The group leader and the co-leaders assessed children who participated in CODIP 3 weeks (beginning-of-program assessment) and 7 weeks (mid-program assessment) after the program had commenced, and then only the co-leaders assessed these children at program completion (post-program assessment). The same group leader participated in each application of CODIP, but there were three different co-leaders for the four CODIP groups.

Pedro-Carroll and her colleagues in their research (1985, 1986, 1989 & 1992) also used this tool of assessment. Current research results are summarized on the following pages, and then compared to the GLEF research results of Pedro-Carroll and her colleagues.

A Cronbach Alpha correlational was used as the statistical tool for the first GLEF analysis when group leader and co-leaders' ratings were compared at the 3-week (beginning-of-program) and 7-week (mid-program) assessments. The rationale for this analysis was to ascertain the degree of inter-rater reliability, and consequently the validity of GLEF ratings. It was assumed that if there was a high inter-rater reliability between co-leaders' and the group leader's ratings that the second statistical analysis which only used co-leaders' ratings would be valid and would also be representative of the group leader's ratings. The statistical tool used for the second analysis of GLEF ratings was a one-way repeated measures ANOVA, with 'Time' (beginning-of-program/mid-program/post-program) as the within subjects factor.

#### **i) Description of first statistical analysis of GLEF ratings.**

In the first statistical analysis of GLEF ratings a Cronbach correlation coefficient was calculated between the group leader and co-leaders' scores at two of the time

measurements. The research question being asked was whether there was a statistically significant inter-rater correlation between the scores of the group leader (rater 1) and the those of co-leaders' (rater 2) at beginning-of-program and mid-program assessments. The group leader was present in all four CODIP groups, hence there is only one group leader (rater 1) rating. There were different co-leaders for each CODIP group, hence there were four co-leader (rater 2) ratings. A significantly high inter-rater correlation would be above 0.5 (Howell, 1995), and would indicate good reliability of raters' assessments. These assessments were only conducted on beginning-of-program and mid-program ratings, as the group leader did not complete the post-program rating. The group leader and each co-leader made these assessments independently and not in correspondence with each other.

A summary of Cronbach correlation coefficient results follows.

ii) Summary of first GLEF statistical analysis.

High inter-rater correlations were indicated at the following time assessments:

- A 0.98 Cronbach Alpha correlation coefficient was established between group leader (rater 1) and co-leaders' (rater 2) ratings for the beginning-of-program assessments of children's 'emotional and behavioral divorce-related problems'. A 0.97 Cronbach Alpha correlation coefficient was established between group leader (rater 1) and co-leaders' (rater 2) ratings for the mid-program assessment of the same factor.
- A 0.98 Cronbach Alpha correlation coefficient was established between group leader (rater 1) and co-leaders' (rater 2) ratings for the beginning-of-program assessment of children's competency skills. A 0.99 Cronbach Alpha correlation coefficient was established between group leader (rater 1) and co-leaders' (rater 2) ratings for the mid-program assessment of the same factor.

These statistically significant correlations between the group leader and her co-leaders, for both ‘emotional and behavioral problems’ and for ‘competency skills’, are indicative of a significantly high inter-rater reliability of GLEF ratings. Thus it appears that group leader and co-leaders’ ratings had high concurrent validity, giving greater validation to the second GLEF analysis.

i) Description of the second statistical analysis for GLEF ratings.

A one-way repeated measures ANOVA, with ‘Time’ (beginning-of-program/mid-program/post-program) as the within subjects factor, was used as the statistical tool for the second analysis. The research question asked was whether the GLEF ratings of children’s ‘behavioral and emotional problems’ (part one) and ‘adaptive competency skills’ (part two) had changed significantly during the first three weeks of the program intervention (beginning-of- program assessment), during the first seven weeks of program intervention (mid-program assessment), or by the end of the program (post-program assessment). Only co-leaders’ ratings are analyzed as their assessments were conducted at all three time measurements.

There was only one assessment for ‘problem’ and ‘competency’ scores, both of which were statistically significant. Consequently there was no need for summarized results tables or a discussion of summarized results as is typical of the normal section (ii) and (iii) format. Instead results are presented in a section (iv) detailed discussion to follow. The format in which these results are presented is an initial one-way repeated measures ANOVA table, followed by a second LSD post-hoc test results table. Finally there is a graphical display of changes in ‘emotional and behavioral problems’ and ‘competency skills’ over time.

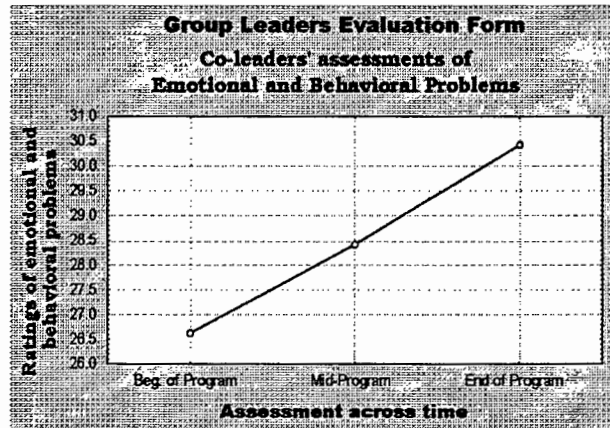
## iv) Detailed presentation of second GLEF analysis.

**Table 72.** One-way repeated measures ANOVA results of co-leaders' assessments of children's 'emotional and behavioral problem' scores over time.

df Effect	MS Effect	Df Error	MS Error	F	p-level
2	50.21	26	5.62	8.93	.001**

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ )**Table 73.** LSD post-hoc test results.

Means	Beginning-of-program 26.64	Mid-program 28.43	End of program 30.43
Beginning-of-program		.057*	.0002**
Mid-program	.057*		.03*
End of program	.0002**	.03*	

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ )**Figure 38.** Means for co-leaders' assessments of children's 'emotional and behavioral problems' over time.

Results indicated that there was a statistically significant difference in co-leaders' assessments of children's 'emotional and behavioral problems' over time at  $\alpha = 0.01$ . Post-hoc test results indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between means 1 (beginning-of-program) and 3 (post-program); and between means 2 (mid-program) and 3 (post-program). Although there is trend that indicates a decline in 'emotional and behavioral divorce-related problems' (as indicated by higher scores) in the first three weeks of program intervention, the most statistically significant improvements in this area occurred during the course of the entire program intervention, and during the latter part of the program (between weeks 7 and 12) when 'competency' skills were being taught.

**Table 74.** One-way repeated measures ANOVA results of co-leaders' assessments of children's 'competency' scores over time.

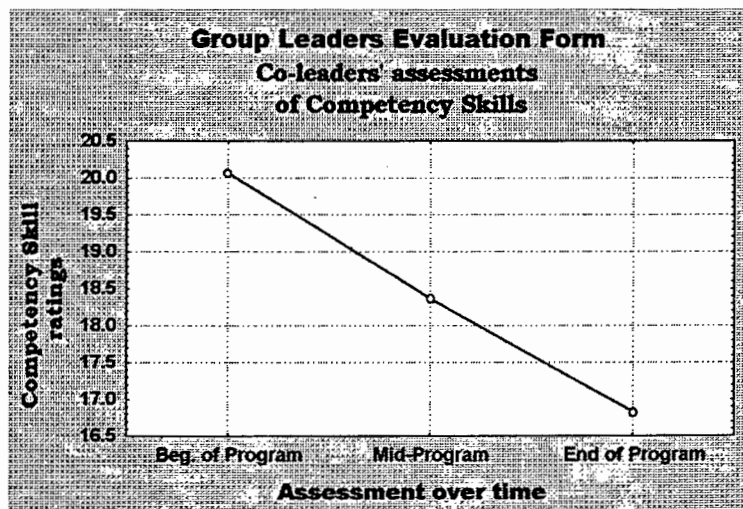
Df Effect	MS Effect	df Error	MS Error	F	p-level
2	33.95	24	6.87	4.94	.02*

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ )

**Table 75.** LSD post-hoc test results.

Means	Beginning-of-program 20.08	Mid-program 18.38	End of program 16.84
Beginning-of-program		.11	.004**
Mid-program	.11		.15
End of program	.004**	.15	

(\* =  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$ )



**Figure 39.** Means of co-leaders' assessments of children's 'competency skills' over time.

Results, as assessed by co-leaders, indicated that there was a statistically significant change in the levels of children's competency as they participated in CODIP ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). LSD post-hoc test results indicated that these differences occurred between mean 1 (beginning-of-program) and mean 3 (end of program). Lower scores indicated a greater degree of competency, thus it appears that there had been a gradual improvement in competency skills (as evidenced by decreasing scores) during program intervention.

### **Research results compared to those of Pedro-Carroll and her Colleagues.**

The Group Leaders Evaluation Form was used by Pedro-Carroll and her colleagues in their research (1985, 1986, 1989 & 1992). As the research design, subject group comparisons, and statistical analysis procedures have already been outlined when discussing Pedro-Carroll et al.'s PEF, CRS and T-CRS research findings, they will not be as extensively detailed for the GLEF results.

In all their research studies (1985, 1986, 1989 & 1992) GLEF ratings were assessed using a dependent t-test as the statistical tool of analysis. In 1985 and 1986 pre-post program mean differences were compared for the experimental group (children who participated in CODIP), and found to be statistically significant at  $p < 0.001$  for the 'competence', 'problem' and overall sum scores. In 1989 overall GLEF scores were rated after the fourth (pre) and sixteenth (post) sessions and statistically compared. Differences for the experimental group at pre-program ( $M = 53.40$ ,  $SD = 10.74$ ) and post-program ( $M = 67.75$ ,  $SD = 9.11$ ) assessments yielded a t ratio of 8.37 which was significant at  $p < 0.001$ .

In their most recent 1992 research the same research design and analytical procedure was used as in their 1989 study. Pedro-Carroll et al. (1992) however, indicated that the first ten items in Part One measured emotional and behavioral problems as opposed to 'problem' areas, and the last ten items assessed adaptive competencies. GLEF results indicated a significant overall improvement in adjustment ( $t = 9.85$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This included reductions in problem behaviors ( $t = 9.28$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and gains in competence ( $t = 9.29$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). (Standard deviations were not reported in the original journal article). Once again program intervention, as assessed by group leaders, indicated a reduction in problem behaviors and an increase in competency skills during program intervention.

The GLEF research results of studies conducted by Pedro-Carroll and her colleagues were the same as the GLEF research results of the current study.

## **Section 4.2. Thematic Analysis Results**

### ***4.2.1. Within a Macrosystemic Context***

The macrosystem is the broadest component of the ecosystemic framework. It is the context that defines the cultural beliefs, values and attitudes that surround family, marriage, parenting roles, the status of women, child rearing and the rights of children. An attempt has been made through the thematic analysis of this context, to ascertain how supportive, or unsupportive, the macrosystemic context is for children who participated in CODIP. This context has been rudimentally assessed through the compilation of 'The Socio-Cultural Attitudes towards Divorce Interview Format'. This scale was used to ascertain whether socio-cultural values of parents of children participating in CODIP, reflected a perception that divorce was a creative alternative to a pathologically functioning marriage, with the potential for positive outcomes; or whether divorce was seen as a socially unacceptable alternative to marriage and the nuclear family? It is hypothesized that these socio-cultural perceptions would give an indication of how supportive, or not, children's macrosystemic/socio-cultural context was in terms of facilitating or impeding their post-divorce adjustment. The description and results of this scale follows.

### **The Socio-Cultural Attitudes toward Divorce Scale (SCADS)**

The Socio-Cultural Attitudes toward Divorce Scale (Appendix 4) was developed for this study to gather descriptive data of the socio-cultural context of children participating in the Children of Divorce Intervention Program. There were no other scales that measured this dimension of post-divorce adjustment for adults or for children. The scale is not standardized, but is used as a descriptive tool to understand parents' perceptions in the following areas (sub-sections): 'Family Structure', 'Marriage', 'Role functioning and Responsibilities within the Family', 'Status of Women in Society', 'Child-rearing', 'Children's Rights' and 'Divorce'.

SCADS was completed at the pre-program assessment by custodial and non-custodial parents as a baseline measurement. It was expected that the macrosystemic context would remain constant and unchanged in terms of its impact on the children's adjustment despite program intervention. It was important to ascertain how supportive or unsupportive this particular context would be to the children during their participation in CODIP and in the fifteen months thereafter. Parents were asked to respond in terms of their own personal opinions and beliefs, and in terms of how similarly they felt these beliefs and opinions were to those of the culture and society in which they lived. The information given was compiled into relevant common themes that emerged within each sub-section. The presentation of these sub-sectional themes follows.

#### ***1. Family Structure:***

Most parents (fifteen mothers, nine fathers, two stepfathers and one stepmother) expressed the opinion that the ideal family structure was a nuclear one. Several parents (two stepfathers and three mothers) felt that other family structures could also function as well as the nuclear family structure. The alternative family structures parents mentioned were: the single parent family structure (one father, one stepfather and one mother); the reconstituted family structure (one stepfather and one mother); and the extended family structure (one stepfather



and one mother). Overall it was felt that although these alternative family structures were viable options, they were not as functional as the nuclear family structure.

Parents listed the following values as important to family functioning: being loving and caring in an unconditional way (six mothers and five fathers), communication (three mothers, one father, and one stepfather), honesty (five mothers, one father and one stepfather), sharing/closeness (three mothers and two fathers), respect (two mothers and three fathers), emotional compatibility/understanding (three mothers and one father), happiness/fun (three mothers and two fathers), loyalty (two mothers, two fathers and one stepfather), common interests (two mothers and one father), trust (three mothers and one father), appreciating things in life (one mother and one father), raising children together (one mother and one father), recognizing individual family member's needs (one mother and one father), religious belief (one mother and one father), being tolerant of each other (two mothers), listening (one mother and one father), being independent (one mother), good interpersonal relationships (one mother), acceptance (one mother), avoiding post-divorce inter-parental conflict (one father), security (one father) and integrity (one father). These variables gave an indication that parents' are aware of which values support the psychological well being of family members. This aspect of the children's macrosystemic context was facilitative of their post-divorce adjustment.

## ***2. Beliefs about Marriage:***

Many parents (eight mothers, eight fathers, one stepmother and one stepfather) indicated that marriage was an important institution within society. Other parents felt that marriage was only an important institution if there was an appropriate relationship between spouses (six mothers, one father and two stepfathers). Other viable alternatives to marriage that were considered by parents was the option of a committed 'living together' arrangement (ten mothers, one father and one stepfather), a single parent family structure (five mothers), a happy divorce (one father), or remarriage with someone who showed an authentic commitment and was able to treat one with affection. Two mothers felt that remarriage of this caliber would provide better role models for their children, as compared to the role models

provided in an intact family fraught with conflict. One father felt remarriage was a poor alternative to marriage or single parenting because of the effect this arrangement had on the children. With regard to 'living together', some parents indicated this was only a viable alternative if one did not have children. One mother felt a proviso to a 'living-together' arrangement should be the security of a legal contract. One father felt that if couples engaged in a 'living-together' arrangement they were not adequately committed to each other anyway.

Marriage, as a socially accepted institution, was still regarded as the highest ideal, but in its own right, was not enough without an inter-spousal relationship that brought satisfaction and psychological benefit. Levinger (1979) in his research indicated that married couples chose divorce as a viable option when at least one partner felt that the stress of being married is so psychologically uncomfortable that it no longer promotes the psychological well being of family members.

One father and one mother felt that families should stay together, because if they get divorced and then remarried, it is difficult for a stepparent to accept another person's children. Two additional fathers and mothers agreed remarriage was not desirable. One father compromised in saying that other family structures resulting from divorce were not ideal, but sometimes was inevitable and socially acceptable. Two mothers felt that single parent families structures were less acceptable than reconstituted family structures. Three mothers and one father acknowledged that the dual 'parenting and work' load of a single custodial parent is a heavy one. One custodial father confirmed this observation by saying that as a result of his divorce his children had become his main preoccupation. Many parents felt that a malfunctioning marriage was not an option, but they also saw many disadvantages to being a single parent, or to marrying again.

One mother felt that pre-marriage counseling would be beneficial. Another mother felt marriage in the church should only be for those who have religious beliefs. Only four parents commented that they held similar values about marriage to that of their society and culture.

Many socio-cultural attitudes reflected by these parents were similar to those indicated in Kurdek's (1981) research. He found that modern day marriage and family life is built around individualistic, humanistic and self-actualizing ideals, with the psychological health and material wealth of the family being the primary focus. Children's post-divorce adjustment is facilitated by this socio-cultural orientation, to the extent that the psychological well being and individual happiness of each family member is important. It is unsupportive in that these ideals lead to the choice of divorce as a viable alternative. According to most parents, divorce as an alternative, did not seem to provide the answer to their psychological discomfort. Most parents in single-parent and reconstituted family structures indicated that they were still unhappy.

### ***3. Family Functioning - Roles, responsibilities, etc.***

Most parents (eleven mothers, four fathers, two stepfathers and one stepmother) felt that roles within the family should be interchangeable depending on the family's circumstances. It was felt that roles and responsibilities should change over time, according to the growth and development of each individual family member (seven mothers, five fathers, two stepfathers and one stepmother). A few parents indicated that roles and responsibilities in the family should be: clearly defined (two mothers and one stepfather), that they should be shared as a way of facilitating family togetherness (three mothers and one father), and that they should be attributed to family members first by choice (as a task the person would like to do) and then according to gender- or other social stereotypes (one father). These perceptions within the macrosystemic context are appropriate for the growth of responsibility and industry within 'children of divorce'.

Some parents felt that roles should be gender specific (one mother). Two parents expressed the opinion that it was the women's role to stay at home to look after the children (one mother and one father). Several parents felt that men and women should take on more androgynous sex roles (four mothers), however one mother indicated that even if parents operated with more androgynous sex roles the woman should still take on more of the

child-rearing responsibilities. Three women expressed the opinion that in South Africa male and female roles were less androgynous and more gender stereotyped because the society is largely paternalistic in its orientation. Parents expressed the opinion that they, themselves, have an important role to play in providing their children with love, security and support (five mothers, two fathers and one stepfather).

Children in a post-divorce situation often experience more androgynous parental functioning, as well as a greater variety of role models. To their advantage these children experience parents who are capable of both working and nurturing, but to their disadvantage they experience parents who are too burdened with a double workload to have adequate time and energy to give to their children.

Parents noted that roles and responsibilities change when family structures change (one mother and one stepfather), and that in a reconstituted family role expectations between spouses are clear, but not between stepparents and their stepchildren. One way in which macrosystemic support could be improved for children in reconstituted families, would be for more guidelines and role models to be available to help stepparents understand how to better facilitate the relationships between themselves and their stepchildren.

Parents indicated that the following *role models* were important to their children: their fathers (two mothers and three fathers), teachers (three mothers, two fathers and one stepfather), their mothers (three mothers), maternal grandparents (two mothers), maternal friends (two mothers), the interplay between spouses (two mothers), parents (two fathers), paternal uncle and/or aunt (one mother and one father), maternal aunt and/or uncle (one mother and one father), stepfathers (one mother), 'sport greats' (one father), children's peers (one father), and a psychologist (one father). Two fathers expressed the opinion that role models were specific to each individual child, according to their age and developmental need.

Parents gave the following reasons as to why these people were important role models: their children admired them (four mothers and one father), the children enjoy being in their company (three mothers and one father), they teach their children how to develop appropriate

interpersonal relationship skills (two mothers), they teach their children how to work hard and excel (one mother and one father), they teach their children honesty and integrity (one father), they teach their children a solid set of personal values (one father), they teach their children how to be practical at fixing things (one mother), and they teach their children gentleness and caring for those who are less fortunate (one mother). One mother said her sister was regarded as an important teenage symbol to her daughter.

In the divorce situation there appears to be a greater discontinuity of parental role models, especially that of the non-custodial parent. 'Children of divorce' experience the discontinuity of parenting from these important people to hinder their post-divorce adjustment. To their advantage however, they have a greater selection of parents, stepparents and multiple relatives from whom they can learn a variety of skills and ways of behaving.

#### *4. Status of women within the society:*

Many parents indicated that women in society were not equal (twelve mothers, two fathers and two stepfathers). These parents felt that society should change and improve in this regard. Other parents felt that the status of women in their society was equal to that of men (four mothers and one father). Some parents expressed the opinion that society should work towards men and women having equal opportunities not only in the work place but in childrearing as well (six mothers and one father). Several parents indicated that women in their families did have equal status to that of men (two mothers, two fathers and one stepfather), but other parents had quite the opposite perception, that women in their families were not regarded as equal (four mothers).

Different attitudes towards women could be attributed to the fact that Afrikaans- and English-speaking people having different orientations to women (two mothers). Some parents expressed the opinion that women should be submissive to men, but not in a dehumanizing way (two mothers and two fathers). One father felt that the man should be

'head of the house', but that he should confer with his wife. He indicated that this was an important Biblical perspective that should be adhered to and that a woman who did not live according to Biblical perspectives and beliefs was very disappointing.

Most parents agreed that women were not treated with equal status and that this societal attitude should change. Parents expressed the opinion that Christian beliefs, Afrikaans cultural attitudes and the belief that South Africa is predominantly a paternalistic society affects women's status in society. This aspect of the macrosystemic context is unsupportive to women who carry most of the child-rearing responsibilities as the custodial parent. Women do not seem to be given adequate status and support to perform this very important function.

##### ***5. Rearing of children:***

Parents expressed the following opinions about societal attitudes towards child rearing: that children should learn respect and adhere to social limits (four mothers, one father and one stepfather), and that they should be given an opportunity to reason. The adage that children should be 'seen and not heard' should be made redundant (three mothers and one father), and children should be reared with discipline as long as it is not excessive (three mothers and one father). Three mothers felt that children should not be given hidings.

The following parental opinions were expressed about child rearing: that they had to learn by instinct how to raise their children (one mother and one stepmother); that children should be reared with a lot of physical contact and affection (three mothers and one father); that communicative interaction was important in child rearing (two mothers and one father); that children are the same as adults except they have less knowledge and competence (one mother); and that children should be reared to learn independence, an acceptance of people, a non-judgmental attitude, a sense of self-worth and an ability to laugh at life and oneself (one mother).

Many of these opinions were very supportive of adaptive child rearing, which makes this aspect of children's macrosystemic context very supportive. Parents, however, were often left with a sense of guilt and personal failure when they did not feel they had attained these societal 'parenting' ideals.

#### **6. *Rights of children:***

Parents felt that children should have a right: to have a home and a family (three mothers, one father and one stepfather); to be taken care of and protected (five mothers and three fathers); to have a proper education (two mothers, four fathers, and two stepfathers); to have freedom of choice (four mothers and two fathers); to have freedom of expression and to be given a fair hearing (three mothers, four fathers and a stepfather); to be respected (one mother and two fathers); not to be forced into a mold; to be allowed to be individuals (one mother and two fathers); to be fed (two mothers); to be facilitated and supported in their growth and development (two mothers); to have a peaceful upbringing (one mother and one stepfather); to retain their dignity (one mother and one stepfather); not to have parent's who get divorced (one father); to be fairly treated (one mother and one father); to be loved and accepted (one mother and one father); receive praise and affirmation (one mother); and to be the first priority (one mother).

Children have a right not to: be violated or abused (four mothers and one stepfather), and not to have to decide which divorced parent they should live with if they are too young (one mother and one stepfather).

There is a strong socio-cultural orientation towards the rights of children to the above-mentioned protection, security and psychological health, over and above the right of the parent to raise their child as they chose. This is particularly so in a divorce situation where courts rule in favor of divorce settlements between disputing parents that ensure the ongoing well being of the child. In this way children's post-divorce adjustment process is facilitated, and at times, is even legally supported by these socio-cultural ideals.

### ***7. Perception of Divorce:***

Many parents agreed that divorced women were perceived in a less favorable way than divorced men. They indicated that this was a double standard (seven mothers, four fathers, two stepfathers and one stepmother). One father disagreed with this opinion as he felt that women were favored over men with regard to custody issues. Some parents commented that women received less societal support than divorced men (three mothers, one father and one stepfather). Two mothers indicated that an additional post-divorce imbalance between men and women, was that men had fewer child-rearing responsibilities and usually saw their children during their leisure time. These women felt that it was easier for men to start a new life.

One mother and one stepfather felt the reason for the high divorce rate is that marital relationship expectations were too high. Many parents expressed the opinion that divorce is more socially acceptable in our current society (nine mothers, three fathers and one stepfather). One stepmother qualified this by remarking that the social acceptability of divorce depends on which culture one is a part of, and added that divorce was not socially acceptable within the Afrikaans community.

Other parents however indicated that there was still a societal stigma attached to divorce (six mothers, four fathers, one stepfather and one stepmother). Three fathers perceived that divorce was seen by society as a catastrophe and as a 'shock' to societal structures. Several parents felt that divorce was less of an issue than society's inability to accept and respect people's unique individual choices (three mothers and two stepfathers). One mother felt that divorce may be an adaptive alternative to a poorly functioning marriage but it was very stressful. Several parents expressed their personal beliefs that divorce was not a solution to family problems and that they had regrets about being divorced (four fathers and two mothers).



Two mothers and one stepfather found friends to be an important source of support; but one mother and one father said they had experienced a loss of support from friends after their divorce.

The overall perception of divorce was that it was less favorable for women than for men. Yet women were most often the custodial parents, carrying the major child-rearing responsibilities. The perception was once again expressed that divorce and subsequent single-parent and remarriage family structures were less favorable, as compared to a well-functioning nuclear family.

Macrosystemic attitudes and ideals foster the psychological well being and happiness of all family members, a good knowledge of child-rearing, and it ensures legal support for children's rights to ongoing protection and care after the divorce event. It does not however seem to offer adequate support in children's post-divorce adjustment in the following ways: mothers, the predominant custodial parent, have less social status and support; divorce is still regarded as a social burden, with the nuclear family persisting as the social ideal; and alternative family structures, as a consequence of divorce, do not seem to provide the sought after personal happiness and psychological comfort so desired by family members.

## **Section 4.2. Thematic Analysis Results**

### ***4.2.2. Within an Exosytemic Context***

The post-divorce exosystemic context is represented by moderating variables that do not impinge directly on the developing or adjusting child, but impact upon the settings in which that child is functioning. These settings include various social institutions like the school, the church, professional services and people who are involved in the child's life outside of his/her family nucleus. All of the measuring instruments assessing the child's exosystemic context are thematically analyzed. They include a description of certain demographic variables such as parents' financial and employment status, and their racial affiliation (assessed from the General Demographic Information questionnaire). In addition, the following scales are used to assess the impact of the exosystem on children's post-divorce adjustment - the Parent and Child Stress/ Support Divorce Adjustment Scales and the 15-month Follow-up questionnaire for Adults and Children. There are two interrelated foci to these scales that operate to hinder or facilitate children's post-divorce adjustment. One focus is an understanding of how many environmental changes and stresses children and their parents are experiencing in their post-divorce situation; and the second focus is an understanding of supportive exosystemic resources that are available to children and their parents that help them to cope with these aforementioned stresses. The results of these scales are reported on the following pages.

**General Demographic Information Questionnaire:  
Parents' Financial and Employment Status, and their Racial Affiliation.**

Summarized information pertaining to parents' financial and employment status, and to their racial affiliation is presented in Tables 76 and 77 below. Thereafter this information is thematically analyzed, presented and evaluated.

*Parent's Socio-economic status.*

**Table 76.** A summary of the financial status of mothers and fathers of children Who participated in CODIP.

<i>Mothers' earnings per month</i>			<i>Fathers' earnings per month</i>		
R0 – R1399	R1400-R2199	R2200 or more	R0 – R1399	R1400-R2199	R2200 or more
4	7	15			16

Most mothers (15 mothers) and all the fathers (16 fathers) of children who participated in CODIP were earning R2200 or more. The salaries of one of the mother's (a non-custodial parent who had two children participating in CODIP) and eleven of the fathers were unknown. This criterion used to represent the average middle-class earning capacity (van der Poel in 1983) was highly outdated for this study in terms of inflation and the earning capacity of the average adult with current middle-class status. Of note however, is that many of the mothers earned below this minimal amount (11 mothers) yet they were predominantly the custodial parents with most of the child-rearing expenses. The Demographic Questionnaire (Appendix 5) from which this information was gathered, did not provide information about additional financial support mothers may have received through the provision of maintenance from their former spouses. Overall, it appears as if fathers were financially more secure than mothers in the pre-program situation. This information is not adequate however in terms of determining the financial status of custodial parents. If the summarized results above reflect a financially inadequate situation for custodial parents, then their exosystemic context is unsupportive, and would impact negatively on the well being of the children in their care.

A summary of parental employment status is given below. A list of various parental occupations are summarized in Table 77. The numbers in parentheses indicate how many parents are employed in each specific occupation.

*Parent's employment status.*

**Table 77.** A summary of parental employment status.

<i>Mothers</i>	<i>Fathers</i>
Project Coordinator Teacher (3) Communication Consultant Bookkeeping Unemployed Framing Business Personal Assistant / Secretary (8) Antique Dealer Nursing sister (3) Manageress of a Clothing Store Advertising Consultant Sales Representative (3)	Engineering surveyor Panel Beating - own business (2) Bottle Store - own business (2) Own business - alcohol dependency (2) Initiating own business (1) Manager of a Rugby Union Employee at Telkom (2) Lawyer (2) Sales Representative (4) Assistant at a Pharmacy Buyer Writer - novelist Seaman Farmer Builder Electronics Engineer

*Parent's racial affiliation.*

There were twenty-one 'White' children, seven 'Coloured' children and no 'Black' children who participated in CODIP. There was a predominance of 'White' middle-class children. This microcosmic representation of the exosystemic context researched confers with South African divorce statistics that indicate 'White' middle class children are the predominant group to be effected by parental divorce. Within the South African society it is still this group that has a higher socio-economic status than 'Black' or 'Coloured' groups, but this societal status is rapidly changing in the post-apartheid South African society where economic imbalances between groups are being rectified.

An overall summary of results of the demographic characteristics of parent's socio-economic status, occupation and racial affiliation follows.

### *Summary of demographic results.*

The assessment of the exosystemic context in terms of parents' financial and employment status indicated that parents of the children participating in CODIP were being adequately supported. It does need to be noted however, that mothers, who were the main custodial parents of these children, appeared to be financially less supported in their exosystemic context than their former male spouses.

According to racial affiliation results it seems that children of 'White' families were predominant in terms of their enrolment into CODIP. This may reflect divorce statistics presented in section 1.1 that children from this race group were reported to be most prevalent in terms of the social phenomenon of divorce.

### *The Stress/Support Divorce Adjustment Scale*

This scale was compiled for the present study to ascertain baseline information pertaining to stresses and supports for parents and children, independently, within their exosystemic context. The scale has not been standardized, and is used as a descriptive tool to understand how sources of stress and support impacted not only on parents themselves, but as a consequence, on their children who were participating in the Children of Divorce Intervention Program.

It was considered important to rate children's, as well as parents', stress/support perceptions, as Kurdek (1981) indicated that:

*"...it seems reasonable to expect that parent's use of support systems might enhance sagging parental competence, thus enabling them to deal directly with their children's difficulty in adjusting to changes incurred by the divorce" (p.859).*

Research has shown that children's perceptions of a particular event are not necessarily the same as that of their parent's (Kurdek, Blisk & Siesky, 1981; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980).

It was also important in assessing the exosystemic impact on parents and children to try and understand the quality of these changes, whether there were a small number of accumulative changes, or whether there were major singular changes. An attempt was made through the scoring structure established for this scale, to evaluate exosystemic impacts/changes along the dimensions of frequency, duration and intensity. As the same change could be positive for some, and negative for others, the scoring structure established also attempted to account for these individual differences.

For the rating of stress, parents and children were asked:

*"Describe all the changes or adjustments in your outer-life/environment that have taken place as a consequence of your divorce/separation in the following areas of your life".*

For adults the following possible stress-related areas were assessed: work roles, financial resources, nutrition, socializing, change in residence, 'any other' sources of stress. For children the following possible stress-related areas were assessed: the impact of the divorce/separation event; changes in daily routine, nutrition or parents' financial situations; new friends, new school and/or new residence. Children also had the opportunity to express 'Other' sources of stress that had not already been listed. All these possible areas of stress were rated from '*Extremely stressful*' (-2) through '*No impact*' (0) to '*Very Positive Impact*' (+2).

For the rating of support, parents and children were asked:

*"What sources of support have been available or useful to you since your separation/divorce?"* Possible sources of support common to parents and children were the extended family, friends, the church and other professional services. Differing sources of support for parents and children were work colleagues for parents, and teacher/school counselor for children. These sources of support were rated from '*Very unhelpful*' (-2) through '*No difference*' (0) to '*Very helpful*' (+2).

The results of each scale are now described.

### **The Stress/Support Adjustment Scale for Adults.**

Theorists listed the following exosystemic factors as being relevant to the post-divorce adjustment of adults: few economic difficulties; frequent social interaction with relatives, friends and the community; making use of self-help organizations; establishing a new intimate relationship (Chiriboga, Stein & Roberts, 1977; Pais & White, 1979); and a non-traditional sex-role self-concept for women (Hetherington, Cox and Cox, 1979; Bloom, White & Asher, 1978).

Nineteen mothers, eight fathers, three stepfathers and three stepmothers rated this scale at the pre-program measurement. Tabulated (Table 78) on the next page, is a description and qualitative summary of these results. In parenthesis are the percentage of parents (out of the total parent sample), who perceived a certain stress or support in a similar way.

**Table 78.** Summary of parental ratings of the Stress/Support Divorce Adjustment Scale.

Mother's ratings					Father's ratings						
Stress	Score		Support	Score		Stress	Score		Support	Score	
Work Roles	-2	1 (7%)	Extended family	-2	1 (7%)	Work Roles	-2	2 (22%)	Extended family	-2	
	-1	1 (7%)		-1	1 (7%)		-1			-1	1 (11%)
	0	7 (50%)		0	2 (14%)		0	4 (44%)		0	1 (11%)
	1	4 (29%)		1	2 (14%)		1	1 (11%)		1	
	2	1 (7%)		2	8 (57%)		2	2 (22%)		2	7 (78%)
Finances	-2	9 (64%)	Friends	-2		Finances	-2	5 (83%)	Friends	-2	
	-1	2 (14%)		-1			-1	1 (17%)		-1	1 (10%)
	0	1 (7%)		0	2 (14%)		0			0	2 (20%)
	1			1	3 (21%)		1			1	4 (40%)
	2	2 (14%)		2	9 (64%)		2			2	3 (30%)
Nutrition	-2		Counselor	-2		Nutrition	-2	1 (14%)	Counselor	-2	
	-1	5 (31%)		-1			-1	4 (57%)		-1	
	0	7 (44%)		0			0	2 (28%)		0	1 (50%)
	1	2 (13%)		1	1 (50%)		1			1	
	2	2 (13%)		2	1 (50%)		2			2	1 (50%)
Daily Routine	-2		Work Colleagues	-2	1 (9%)	Daily Routine	-2		Work Colleagues	-2	1 (13%)
	-1	2 (50%)		-1			-1	1 (33%)		-1	
	0	2 (50%)		0			0	2 (66%)		0	2 (25%)
	1			1	7 (64%)		1			1	2 (25%)
	2			2	3 (27%)		2			2	3 (38%)
Socializing	-2	1 (7%)	Church	-2		Socializing	-2	1 (17%)	Church	-2	
	-1	8 (53%)		-1	1 (13%)		-1	3 (50%)		-1	1 (17%)
	0	3 (20%)		0	4 (50%)		0	1 (17%)		0	4 (66%)
	1			1	1 (13%)		1	1 (17%)		1	
	2	3 (20%)		2	2 (25%)		2			2	1 (17%)
Change in residence	-2	4 (27%)	Professional Help	-2		Change in residence	-2	1 (14%)	Professional Help	-2	
	-1	4 (27%)		-1	2 (18%)		-1	2 (28%)		-1	
	0	2 (13%)		0	3 (27%)		0	3 (43%)		0	5 (56%)
	1	3 (20%)		1	3 (27%)		1			1	
	2	2 (13%)		2	3 (27%)		2	1 (14%)		2	2 (44%)
Other	-2	8 (47%)	Other	-2		Other	-2	1 (20%)	Other	-2	
	-1	2 (12%)		-1			-1	1 (20%)		-1	
	0			0			0			0	
	1	4 (24%)		1			1	1 (20%)		1	1
	2	3 (18%)		2			2	2 (40%)		2	



***Stress rating:***

- 2 = *Extremely stressful*
- 1 = *Moderately stressful*
- 0 = *No impact*
- +1 = *Positive Impact*
- +2 = *Very positive Impact*

***Support rating***

- 2 = *Very unhelpful*
- 1 = *Moderately Unhelpful*
- 0 = *No difference*
- +1 = *Helpful*
- +2 = *Very Helpful*

***Qualitative Summary of Tabulated results:***

In terms of *work roles*, both mothers and fathers perceived changes to be positive as opposed to being stressful. A large percentage of parents experienced no change in this area, work remained a consistent area of support. Most parents also indicated that work colleagues were an important source of support.

Mothers and fathers agreed that there were many *financial stresses* in the post-divorce situation. Mothers found the *nutritional value of their diet* had predominantly remained unchanged whereas father seemed to experience this as a greater source of change and stress. 50% of mothers and 66% of fathers indicated their *daily routine* had remained unchanged in their post-divorce situation - a possible indication that many changes indicating physical and emotional estrangement had already taken place within the family even before the divorce/separation event.

Men and women found that initially their *socializing situation* deteriorated in the post-divorce situation. There was less dating, but friends were an important source of support, especially for women. Very few parents saw the church as a source of support, but once again women turned more to this source of support than men did. Very few parents turned to outside counselors or self-help organizations as sources of support. Most parents found their friends, work colleagues and particularly their extended family to be adequate support.

Some parents found *changing residence* to be a source of stress (four mothers and two fathers). Other parents experienced no change in residence (three fathers and two mothers), whereas two mothers found their change in residence to be a moderately positive event.

Some of the '*other*' parental supports and stresses are now described. The numbers in parentheses indicate how parents rated these specific sources of stress from '*extremely stressful*' (-2) to '*very positive impact*' (+2). Some parents felt they had become better parents in the post-divorce situation (+1), but that it was challenging having to be flexible and take-on many different roles at the same time (-1). One mother felt that her remarriage situation had necessitated a move away from controlling parents which had been positive for her (+2). Another mother had moved in with her parents in the post-divorce situation, she found this both supportive (+1) and interfering (-1).

One mother felt relieved that she was now estranged from her husband as he had a 'drinking problem' which lead to much conflict in the home (+2). Unfortunately despite their separation the conflict had not ended, but had been transmuted to conflict between herself and her children (-2).

One father found his change in work role to be stressful (-2) but also challenging (+2). One mother felt working outside the home again in the post-divorce situation was both challenging (+1) and stressful (-1). The same mother felt that there was greater responsibility (-1) and independence (+1) in being a single parent. There was a greater closeness between family members, as they had to rely on each other more (+1). She felt that although there had been greater spiritual growth for her (+2), she also needed to take medication for depression (-2). She had recently moved to Cape Town, which she found to be a strange (-1) but beautiful (+1) city.

One father felt that the decision to divorce had lead to 'peace of mind' (+2), and a more meaningful relationship with his children (+2). Several parents expressed the following post-divorce adjustment stresses - ongoing conflict with their former spouse, difficulties with regards to 'Access'; and that they missed their former spouse (-2). Other parents felt they had made a positive decision to get out of a difficult, poorly functioning marriage (+2).

Some parents experienced financial problems, with little legal support and protection, in terms of maintenance defaulting.

In conclusion, the parental ratings of the SDASA indicated that there were few sources of stress, other than financial stress, in parents' exosystemic context. Overall parents were experiencing adequate exosystemic support, and thus were in a better position to foster their children's post-divorce adjustment. From the varied comments in the "Other" section however it becomes apparent that the exosystemic context for each individual parent is unique.

### **The Stress/Support Divorce Adjustment Scale for Children (SDASC).**

Wallerstein (1983) says:

*"Divorce, too, is not as simple a stress as it might at first sight appear to be, and it is seldom clear during the early stages, exactly what is lost or what is gained. From the child's perspective the dissolution of the intact family brings a train of losses, and, perhaps, gains in its wake. Thus, divorce, like death, is always accompanied and followed by many other long-lasting changes. ... long-lasting changes that follow divorce carry the promise of positive changes and relief as family stability is reestablished. For a significant number of children, losses may continue to outweigh any gains, the eventual balance is probably impossible to assess at the outset" (p.270).*

From the above quote, the importance of understanding how children's post-divorce adjustment is facilitated or impeded by exosystemic stresses and supports is apparent. The research question asked when thematically describing this scale was whether children who participated in CODIP could learn coping skills that would help them adjust to exosystemic stresses and changes, and would enable them to access appropriate extra-familial resources to do so.

Wallerstein and Kelly (1980) expressed that children's post-divorce adjustment is impeded by their perception that they are out of control of environmental changes such as having to attend a new school, move to a new residence and to adapt to changes in parental attitudes and behavior. Stolberg (1980) has provided evidence that links high degrees of environmental change to children's depression, social withdrawal, aggression and delinquency and to their perception that they themselves, as well as their parents, are having difficulty in controlling their world. Kurdek (1981) indicates that:

*"...if children's divorce adjustment is related to environmental change, then it seems that support systems designed to alleviate stresses related to these changes would offset the severity of child adjustment problems" (p.858).*

It is unlikely that CODIP is able to facilitate contextual changes at the exosystemic level, but it can impact on children's perception of their exosystemic context, and how they cope in areas where there are many stresses and too few supports.

The SDASC was completed by 28 children at the pre-program measurement.

On the following page are a tabulated summary (Table 79) and a thematic analysis of the children's SADSC results. In addition, personal comments of individual children are reported from the 'Other' sub-section. In parentheses is the percentage of children, out of the total sample group, who rated a particular score as '*extremely stressful*' or '*very unhelpful*' (-2) to '*very positive impact*' or '*very helpful*' (+2).

Table 79. Summary of children's ratings of the Stress/Support Divorce Adjustment Scale.

Girls						Boys					
Stress	Score		Support	Score		Stress	Score		Support	Score	
New tasks	-2		Extended family	-2		New tasks	-2	1 (10%)	Extended family	-2	
	-1			-1			-1	1 (10%)		-1	3 (27%)
	0	9 (75%)		0	3 (38%)		0	5 (50%)		0	5 (45%)
	1	2 (17%)		1			1	2 (20%)		1	1 (9%)
	2	1 (8%)		2	5 (63%)		2	1 (10%)		2	2 (18%)
Daily routine	-2	2 (15%)	Friends	-2		Daily routine	-2		Friends	-2	
	-1	4 (30%)		-1	1 (13%)		-1			-1	
	0	6 (45%)		0	1 (13%)		0	7 (78%)		0	4 (40%)
	1	1 (8%)		1	4 (50%)		1	1 (11%)		1	4 (40%)
	2			2	2 (26%)		2			2	2 (20%)
Nutrition	-2		School counselor	-2		Nutrition	-2	1 (11%)	Teacher	-2	
	-1	2 (17%)		-1			-1			-1	
	0	10 (83%)		0	2 (28%)		0	5 (56%)		0	5 (63%)
	1			1	3 (43%)		1	1 (11%)		1	2 (26%)
	2			2	2 (28%)		2	2 (22%)		2	1 (13%)
Finance	-2	3 (27%)	Church	-2		Finance	-2	3 (30%)	Church	-2	
	-1	2 (18%)		-1			-1	1 (10%)		-1	
	0	6 (56%)		0	3 (43%)		0	6 (60%)		0	4 (66%)
	1			1	2 (28%)		1			1	1 (17%)
	2			2	2 (28%)		2			2	1 (17%)
Change in school	-2	1 (8%)	Other help	-2		Change in school	-2		Other help	-2	2 (28%)
	-1	1 (8%)		-1			-1	3 (30%)		-1	1 (14%)
	0	8 (75%)		0	2 (33%)		0	7 (70%)		0	3 (43%)
	1			1	1 (17%)		1			1	
	2	2 (17%)		2	3 (50%)		2			2	1 (14%)
Change in home	-2	1 (8%)	Other	-2		Change in home	-2	4 (40%)	Other	-2	
	-1	2 (17%)		-1			-1	2 (20%)		-1	
	0	6 (50%)		0			0	1 (10%)		0	
	1			1			1	3 (30%)		1	
	2	3 (25%)		2			2			2	
Change of friends	-2	1 (9%)				Change of friends	-2	2 (20%)			
	-1						-1				
	0	8 (72%)					0	6 (60%)			
	1	1 (9%)					1	2 (20%)			
	2	1 (9%)					2				
Other	-2	6 (66%)				Other	-2	7 (100%)			
	-1	1 (11%)					-1				
	0						0				
	1	1 (11%)					1				
	2	1 (11%)					2				

Explanations for terminology used in Table 79 are explained below.

***Stress rating:***

- 2 = *Extremely stressful*
- 1 = *Moderately stressful*
- 0 = *No impact*
- +1 = *Positive Impact*
- +2 = *Very positive Impact*

***Support rating***

- 2 = *Very unhelpful*
- 1 = *Moderately Unhelpful*
- 0 = *No difference*
- +1 = *Helpful*
- +2 = *Very Helpful*

***Thematic Summary of SDASC results:***

Most boys and girls felt that they did not have *new tasks* to accomplish as a result of their parent's separation/divorce (nine girls and five boys). Some children, however, did have new tasks; two boys were finding these tasks stressful, whereas other children felt that the new tasks they had to perform had a positive impact on their lives (three boys and three girls).

Some children felt their *daily routine* had not changed (seven boys and six girls), whereas other children felt that their daily routine had changed adversely and was having a stressful impact on their lives (six girls and one boy). Most of these children commented that attending aftercare as a result of their custodial parent working was the major adversarial source of change in their daily routine. Only one boy and one girl felt that their daily routine had changed favorably.

Most children felt their *daily diet (nutrition)* had not changed as a result of their parents' divorce (ten girls and five boys). Two girls felt their nutrition had become worse, and three boys felt that their daily diet had improved. Overall change in nutrition does not appear to be an exosystemic source of stress for these children.

Some children were unaware that any *financial changes* had occurred as a result of their parent's separation/divorce (six girls and six boys), but several children commented that their parents were experiencing financial changes as stressful (five boys and five girls). Overall, financial changes seem to be stressful for most parents and over half of their children. This appears to be a significant area of the exosystemic context that impacts adversely on

most family members in the post-divorce situation. It is not apparent from these research findings whether some children find financial changes stressful because their parents were finding this to be an area of stress.

Most children had not experienced any *changes in the schools* they were attending (eight girls and seven boys). One boy and one girl did experience this change and found it to be stressful, whereas two girls who also experienced this change found it to have a positive impact on their lives. Several children experienced a *change in residence* as stressful (three girls and six boys). Other children did not experience any change in this area (six and one boy), and two girls and one boy found a change in residence to have a positive impact in their lives. Change in residence is inevitable for one or more family members when parents divorce. This can be a significant area of stress in children's exosystemic context. Often as a result of change in school or residence children need to find *new friends* - an important source of support in their lives. Most of the children participating in CODIP however indicated that they did not have to change their friends (eight girls and six boys). One girl and two boys did have to change friends and found this a significant area of stress in their lives, two other boys and two girls found having to find new friends to have had a positive impact on their lives.

There has been growing public awareness through newspapers, popular magazines, and even publications by nationwide supermarket chainstores to provide knowledge for divorcing adults as to how best to support their own, and their children's, post-divorce adjustment. The increased social awareness and understanding that it is stressful to make too many environmental changes, especially in the first two years after the post-divorce/separation event, is reflected by the minimized number of changes in school and residence for the children who participated in this study.

Some children found the *extended family* to be supportive in their post-divorce situation (six girls and three boys), whereas other children found the extended family to make little difference in their lives (three girls and five boys). Some boys actually found the extended family to be moderately unhelpful (three boys). The extended family seems to be more of a

source of support to the girls participating in CODIP than to the boys, and more of a source of support to parents than to children.

Most children found *friends* to be an important source of social support (six girls and six boys). Other children found friends did not make any difference (one boy and four girls), and one girl actually found her friends to be unsupportive. CODIP, a group intervention that provides positive peer interaction is thus an important form of exosystemic support.

Several children found *school counselors and teachers* to be a helpful source of support (five girls and three boys). Other children did not access this source of support (two girls and five boys). Some children felt that the *church* and *professional services* made no difference in terms of social support (three girls and four boys; two girls and three boys respectively), however other children found these groups to be an important source of support (three girls and three boys; three girls respectively). One boy actually remarked that a professional source had been unhelpful in his life. There was a higher incidence of the church being a source of support for children as compared to their parents.

In terms of social support girls seem to access sources of support more readily than boys, which leaves boys more at risk in their post-divorce adjustment. Most children turned to friends. Girls more readily accessed help from caring professionals at school and within other professional services.

Listed below are '*other*' sources of stress and support for children. It is interesting to note that all additional areas of stress listed by all seven boys and six of the girls were rated as 'extremely stressful'. Once again, reported in parentheses are the children's ratings from '*extremely stressful*' (-2) to '*very positive impact*' (+2).

Many children remarked that a significant source of stress for them was that they did not see as much of their father as they used to (-2). One child said it was very difficult for her when her father left (-2) and that she found it difficult when he became very angry (-2). Another child said an additional source of stress for him was that he was very sad about



the divorce (-2). One child said that as a result of the divorce he had to move to a new school where he had much more homework (-2), but he was also pleased that he was seeing more of his father since the divorce (+2). One child said that she was pleased to have moved to a new school because she does not get so many hidings there (+2).

Children also commented that there was sometimes a difference in support from the paternal side of the extended family as opposed to the maternal side of the extended family. Another child was pleased that as a result of the divorce they were going to a new church (+2).

Several children found it stressful that their mother's had new men in their lives (-2). Two children from the same family commented that a source of stress for them was that they had to get used to Dad's new girlfriend and her children (-2). The same children also expressed that they did not like visiting with their father when he fought with his new girlfriend (-2). Two other children said they felt really shocked when their Dad remarried as they had only met his new wife a few times (-2).

In conclusion, significant areas of stress rated by children in this section were: the decreased contact they had with their fathers in the post-divorce situation; and children's perceptions that when either parent had a new man or woman in their lives that person was seen to be replacing the parent that was not available. Children appear to be discouraged when their parents remarry, and when there is ongoing conflict in their new family situations. CODIP attempts to address some of these exosystemic sources of stress. For example children learn that with the advent of the divorce/separation process parents' behavior and attitudes change. A divorce-related misconception that a non-custodial parent does not visit because the child is 'bad', may be better understood through CODIP intervention, to be due to the parent's own feelings of guilt or anger that have nothing to do with how 'good' or 'bad' a child is. Other aspects of exosystemic stress - parent's dating or ongoing conflict between parents - are beyond the scope of the program to address.

Although children have some exosystemic support outside of their own families, it does not seem to be adequate. A few suggestions as to how children can be provided with more substantial exosystemic support are:

- to ensure adequate exosystemic support for parents so that they in turn are more able to support their children's post-divorce adjustment;
- to more directly support children through the provision of adequate group intervention programs;
- to encourage children, especially boys, to access the sources of support that are available to them in the school setting in terms of teachers and counselors; and
- to encourage extended family members to not only provide support for parents, but to provide direct support for children as well.

#### **The 15-Month Follow-up Questionnaire for Adults and Children (FQA/FQC).**

Divorce is perceived as a multi-stage process beginning with the marital rupture and then dealing with the aftermath that follows. Wallerstein (1983b, p.274) talks about the '*time trajectory of divorce*'. She feels that the divorce process can be divided into three stages - the 'acute phase', the 'transition phase' and the 'stabilizing phase'. These phases characterize periods of de-stabilization, transition and ongoing change that occupy most years of a child's life. Understanding gained from a thematic discussion of the 'length of time since parental separation/divorce' (section 4.2.3.), indicated that children who participated in CODIP fundamentally fell into two groups in terms of these phases. 'Group one' was found to be in the 'acute' phase of the divorce process, and 'group two'<sup>2</sup> to be in the 'transitional' or 'stabilizing' phases. The former phase is precipitated by parents separating and is followed by legal preparations for divorce. It is a phase which usually covers a time period of about two years and is characterized by stress, chaos and change. In the transition phase much psychosocial energy is absorbed in adjusting to

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<sup>2</sup> The children were not actually divided into 'group one' and 'group two', but in terms of our understanding of which phase of the divorce process these children identified with, they were defined in this way.

fundamental relationship changes between parents and children as they adapt to a new, and initially unfamiliar, post-divorce family structure. It is also a time when parents begin to date again and children who have just consolidated possible environmental changes like a new school or a new home, now have to adjust to possible new relationship dynamics that become included within the new post-divorce family structure. The stabilizing phase is characterized by a more consolidated and well-adjusted post-divorce family unit.

The 15-month Follow-up Questionnaire for Adults and Children (Appendix 8 & 9 respectively) was developed to gain understanding of how parents' and children's lives have stabilized or changed over the 15-month period after program participation. The research question asked when using this questionnaire was whether the lives of research subjects and their parents' changed over time. Once again, as with the Stress/Support Divorce Adjustment Scales for Children and Adults, this is not a standardized scale, but is used as a descriptive tool to facilitate understanding of the divorce process over time.

### **Fifteen-month Follow-up Questionnaire for Adults (FAQ)**

This questionnaire was completed by fourteen mothers, six fathers and two stepfathers. The adult scale asked questions pertinent to possible changes in the following exosystemic areas of influence: the environment, relationships, employment status, custody/access, financial status, social support and any 'other' areas that had not been listed. Summarized below are the results. In parentheses is the number of parents who expressed the same opinion in a particular area.

Several parents indicated there had been no *environmental changes* in their lives over the past fifteen months (five mothers and one father), other parents indicated there had been environmental changes in the following ways:

- changes in children's schools (four mothers and one father),

- changes in residence (four mothers, one father and one stepfather). One mother had moved from the city to a small town, whilst another mother had moved from an impoverished lower socio-economic dwelling to a wealthy luxurious residence. All changes in residence were regarded as positive.
- changes in family structure - for one family, an estranged husband and father had moved back home after the couple had already been divorced for four years. He stayed for three and a half months and then moved out again.

Several parents indicated there had been no *relationship changes* in their lives over the past fifteen months (five mothers and two fathers). Other parents indicated the following relationship changes had occurred over the same time period:

- a new boyfriend (one mother),
- more regular dating (two mothers)
- established post-divorce relationships had been terminated (one father and one mother).

The mother gave the following reasons for the end of her relationship: a change in residential location and that her ex-boyfriend could not tolerate the priority she afforded to her children. Both parents felt relieved that these relationships had ended and as a consequence they both had more energy to move into new spheres of creativity and self-employment.

- remarriage (one mother). She had remarried into a socially, emotionally and financially more secure situation.
- improved relationships with children and stepchildren (one mother and one step-father)

The mother indicated the relationship between herself and her daughter had improved; and the stepfather felt that his relationship with his stepdaughter had improved as contact with her father was decreased, and as he had begun to understand the dynamics of a reconstituted family more adequately.

Four parents had experienced no changes in their *employment status* over the last fifteen months (three mothers and one father), whereas eight mothers indicated their employment situation had improved. They saw their improved financial and professional status as advantageous, but often found their workload demanding, and felt sad that it took them

away from their homes and families. Two mothers had embarked on self-employment opportunities. One mother felt very 'stretched' in terms of her workload; she was the sole provider for her family as a consequence of the death of her estranged husband. Another mother continued to be unemployed outside of the home, but as a consequence of her remarriage and the acquisition of three stepchildren as well as her own two children, she was fully employed within her new home. One mother was struggling financially because her former husband had become unemployed and had halved the amount of maintenance support he was giving her. Overall most of these post-divorce employment changes had been very beneficial in terms of work status and financial gain, but the loss was to the children who saw less of their working mothers. Two fathers had started new avenues of employment - one father was finding this meaningful and financially beneficial, the other father was struggling financially.

Several parents indicated there had been no change in the *custody or access* to their children (six mothers and two fathers). Four boys, however, had moved from mother-custody homes to staying with their fathers.

Four mothers indicated there had been no change in their *social support*. Other parents indicated the following social support changes:

- One mother said their reconstituted family had benefited as a result of a member of her extended family, her sister, coming to live with them. This couple was very busy in their work environment.
- Another mother said she had the same friends as before.
- The widowed mother felt that her workload had increased and her social support had decreased because she had become tired and socially withdrawn.
- Another mother who had become self-employed felt pleased that she was spending more time at home and giving more support to her children.
- One mother was pleased that she had reestablished contact with her therapist which was an important source of support for her, she was finding that she had new friends and an active new social life.
- One family felt very supported by her new husband and reconstituted family.

Overall the improvements in the lives of mothers of children participating in CODIP seemed to be positive, except for the one widowed mother who had no family support, few friends, and a very heavy work load.

The picture for two of the fathers was not as positive. One father felt very embittered after having to endure a court case involving a maintenance dispute. There was much inter-parental conflict even though the parents had been divorced for seven years. Another father commented that he was also enduring ongoing conflict with his former spouse, even though he had been divorced for four years. As a consequence his younger son had to receive psychological help.

Overall it seems that the mothers of children participating in CODIP had made positive post-divorce adaptations in terms of residence, finance, occupational status and new relationships. Some of the fathers were finding it more difficult to contend with growing financial pressures and ongoing inter-parental conflict many years after their divorce. Their custody and access to their children, and their relationships with these same children seemed to have meaningfully improved in the 15 months following program intervention. This is a positive finding in the light of previous research findings that the relationship between the non-custodial parent and his/her child(ren) deteriorates over time (Hetherington, 1979, Wallerstein, 1989).

#### **Fifteen-month Follow-up Questionnaire for Children (FCQ)**

The children's perception of the divorce process 15 months after program intervention was not as positive as their parents. Eighteen children completed this questionnaire by expressing their opinions about the following possible changes that could have occurred in their lives over the last 15 months: their perception of the divorce; their relationship with their parents; changes in school and/or residence; changes in lifestyle, in family

structure, in how they felt about themselves; and any other significant changes they wanted to comment on. These results are discussed below.

Four children felt there had been no change in terms of *their perceptions about the divorce event*. One child now attributed paternal blame, as compared to maternal blame, to the divorce event; another child realized both parent's were to blame; and a third child still thought her parents would come back together again.

Five children experienced no change with regards to their *relationships with their parents*. One boy however, was experiencing severe relationship problems with a controlling mother, now that he was entering adolescence. He wanted to establish more of his own identity and freedom. One girl was unhappy that her mother had a new boyfriend. She perceived this to be affecting her relationship with her mother. Another girl was very upset about her father's remarriage.

Three children had experienced no *changes in school or residence*, other children had moved to new schools (three girls and two boys), and still other children had moved to new residential locations and homes (three girls). Children generally expressed they were coping with these changes. One boy was pleased that he was now enjoying the new school he had moved to prior to program intervention.

Two children expressed their *lifestyle* had not changed. Other children expressed the following changes in lifestyle:

- One child concurred with her mother and stepfather that the arrival of her maternal aunt to live with them had been a positive source of support in her life.
- One child said her mother had a better job.
- Another child was displeased that they were living in a smaller house now.
- One boy was proud that his father was now a journalist writing for magazines; and
- Another child was feeling comfortable with her new stepfather who gave her more pocket money!

Three children reported there had been no changes in their family structure. One girl whose 'mother had married another family's father' felt their new family structure was a beneficial one. Another child expressed her distress that their family structure had changed when her estranged father came to live with them, and then changed again when he left. She said, "I cried the whole night".

Most children indicated that there had been no change in how they *felt about themselves*. One girl felt more self-conscious about her weight and appearance as she entered adolescence. Another child was feeling more confident about himself and more settled now that there was less inter-parental conflict to contend with. One boy felt more confident now that he had adapted to residential, school and custody changes he had made 18 months previously. One girl who had become a part of a reconstituted family structure in the last 15 months expressed that she felt 'more free' (i.e. less burdened with the initial poverty and maternal stress she had experienced soon after her parents separated.) The child whose estranged father had moved in with them for a few months and then left again said she felt 'a little better now' - three months after the event.

Other significant changes the children mentioned that had occurred in the last 15 months were: one child was pleased that he was now allowed to go to parties and have the responsibility and freedom to monitor his own money. This child was fourteen years old and receiving two hundred and fifty rands per month. Another child was not so happy that he was now attending a different school and different classes. One child mentioned her mother had gone to hospital for a few days because she was dehydrated. Another child expressed the sadness and stress that her father had 'quit' his job and halved the maintenance.

Most children in the divorce process have to deal with divorce-related issues for most of their childhood years, and at each nodal stage of their psycho-social development. As Wallerstein (1989) so succinctly explains:

*"The changes which occur during these years are likely to be at a very different tempo than anticipated at the time of the decision to divorce. They*



*are likely to be abrupt, episodic, moreover, to occur in all domains of family life, economic, social, psychological and sexual, as well as in parent-child relationships and household spheres of functioning. Many of the changes which are reflected in school, in the neighborhood, in the home, in child care patterns, in the availability of each parent, and in the general standard of living, occur within a compressed time span, during the early post-separation period. As a result, the experience of many children is that almost all aspects of their lives are in flux over a period of years, and that the world as they knew it has lost its sense of stability and order” (pp. 275/276).*

This view of the stresses, supports and changes illustrated by the children who participated in CODIP programs, and their parents, confirms what Wallerstein has observed in her own research findings. Her research findings also indicated however, that with time, children become more stabilized in their post-divorce situation unless they incur other major exosystemic changes. Children who participated in CODIP seemed better able to cope with the necessary adjustments incurred by further major life changes.

## **Section 4.2. Thematic Analysis Results**

### ***4.2.3. Within the Microsystemic context***

The research focus for this study within the microsystemic context is the effect of family interrelationships on children's post-divorce adjustment and development. This has been the primary research focus for many theorists observing the effects of divorce on children. Some theorists have looked at post-divorce family functioning in the two transitional years following parental separation or divorce (Hetherington, Cox & Cox, 1978; 1979); other theorists have considered post-divorce family functioning over a longer period of time (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1974; 1975; 1976; 1977; 1980; Wallerstein, 1987; Wallerstein, Corbin & Lewis, 1988; Wallerstein & Corbin, 1989). Yet other theorists have looked at changed post-divorce family structures in terms of remarriage and the step-parenting family (Bray, Berger, Silverblatt & Hollier, 1987). Most of the analyses conducted in the microsystemic context have been quantitatively assessed in Section 4.1.1. Several variables however are thematically analyzed in this section. These variables include the length of time parents have been separated or divorced; the impact of changed family structures on 'children of divorce'; and the impact of access arrangements made between estranged spouses to ensure ongoing contact between non-custodial parents and their children. The latter variable is specifically assessed using The Parent-Access Related Interview.

**General Demographic Information Questionnaire:  
Family Structure, Marital History and Access Arrangements between  
divorced parents.**

The specific demographic information pertaining to family structure and the marital history of divorced/separated parents is presented in Tables 80, 81 and 82 to follow. Thereafter access arrangements and problems between divorced/separated parents are described. Information is gathered for the latter description from relevant sections of the Demographic Information Questionnaire (Appendix 5) and from The Parent-Access Related Interview Structure (Appendix 10).

***Family structures of children who participated in CODIP.***

**Table 80.** A summary of the family structure represented in the homes of children who participated in CODIP:

<b><i>Mother-centered Home - Mother is the Custodial Parent:</i></b>			<b><i>Father-centered Home - Father is the Custodial Parent:</i></b>		
No siblings	1 sibling	2 siblings	1 sibling	2 siblings	3 siblings
7	17	2			2

Twenty-six of the children who participated in CODIP lived in mother-centered homes. Only two of the children lived with their fathers. Seven of the twenty-six children who lived in mother-centered homes, did not live in a single parent family structure, but in the following family structures:

- One child lived in a reconstituted family structure where both parents had remarried, she lived with her mother.
- Three of the children lived in a reconstituted family structure where their mothers had 'living together' arrangements with their boyfriends. Most of these 'living together' arrangements had been long-term commitments of two to seven years.
- One child had lived with his father and stepmother for most of his life. A few months prior to his participation in CODIP he had decided to live with his mother who had a longstanding relationship with her boyfriend.

- Two children lived with their mothers and with their mothers' boyfriends. During program intervention their mothers were married to these same men.

***Marital History of parents' whose children participated in CODIP.***

**Table 81.** Number of years parents were married before their separation or divorce:

<i>0-3yrs</i>	<i>3-6yrs</i>	<i>6-9yrs</i>	<i>9-12yrs</i>	<i>12-15yrs</i>	<i>over 15yrs</i>
3	5	7	7	3	3

**Table 82.** Number of years parents had been separated or divorced at the time of their child's entrance into CODIP:

<i>0-2yrs</i>		<i>2-3yrs</i>		<i>3-4yrs</i>		<i>4-5yrs</i>		<i>5-6yrs</i>		<i>over 6 yrs</i>	
<i>Sep.</i>	<i>Div.</i>	<i>Sep.</i>	<i>Div.</i>	<i>Sep.</i>	<i>Div.</i>	<i>Sep.</i>	<i>Div.</i>	<i>Sep.</i>	<i>Div.</i>	<i>Sep.</i>	<i>Div.</i>
7	4	2	2		2		3		2		6

Seven of the children participating in CODIP had parents who were not as yet divorced, and four other children had parents who had been divorced for less than two years.

Hence eleven children were at the 'acute' phase of the divorce process. Most theorists suggest that the two years after parental separation or divorce are the most vulnerable years, fraught with change, confusion and stress (Emery, 1988; Hetherington, Cox & Cox, 1979; Kalter Schaefer, Lesowitz, Alpern & Pickar, 1988).

Grych & Fincham (1992) suggest that therapeutic intervention should be introduced as soon after the divorce/separation event as possible, and at each nodal transitional stage of the child's development. In terms of this recommendation almost half of the children who participated in CODIP had received some therapeutic support at this critical point in time.

Parents of fifteen of the children had been divorced for two years or more. Two other children had parents whom although not yet divorced, had been separated for more than two years. Consequently seventeen children were presumed to have passed the 'acute phase' of the divorce process (Wallerstein 1989), and were in the 'transitory' or

'stabilizing' phases of the divorce process. These children were no longer considered to be at the most vulnerable stage of the divorce process, but they too encountered continuing changes as parents moved beyond divorce and separation to remarriage and other alternative 'living together' arrangements.

*Access arrangements established between divorced/separated parents of children who participated in CODIP.*

Sixteen of the children who participated in CODIP spent every second weekend and some school holidays with their non-custodial parent. Only four of these children had regular contact with their non-custodial parent during the week. Seven other children had minimal and irregular contact with their non-custodial parent. One child had, had no contact with his father whatsoever since he was a few months old, even though his father lived in the same province.

On average half of the children who participated in CODIP (thirteen of the twenty-eight children) were experiencing severe access-related problems. During program intervention children shared that one of the most painful happenings of the divorce process was that they had inadequate contact with their non-custodial parent. The quality of children's ongoing relationship with the parent they do not live with is vital to their sense of well being (Santrock & Warshack, 1979, 1982). Some innovations were introduced to address this issue, but in general facilitating a better relationship between non-custodial parents and their children was beyond the scope of this program. The innovations introduced were to invite both custodial and non-custodial parents to attend pre-program, mid-program and post-program parent meetings, and secondly to invite both custodial and non-custodial parents to be involved in pre-program, post-program and follow-up ratings of questionnaires. These innovations helped parents understand the importance of ongoing contact between non-custodial parents and their children. In some circumstances this involvement encouraged contact between children and their fathers. In other

situations however inadequate contact with a non-custodial parent was a sad reality of the post-divorce situation some children had to accept.

### **The Parent-Access Related Interview (PARI).**

This questionnaire (Appendix 5) was developed by van der Poel in 1983. It was used to attain descriptive information relating to parents' perceptions of post-divorce access arrangements. It was completed by nineteen mothers, eight fathers, three stepmothers and three stepfathers at the pre-program measurement and by sixteen mothers, ten fathers, three stepmothers and three stepfathers at the post-program measurement. Each parent rated which access arrangement was most typical of their post-divorce/separation situation. These PARI results are summarized in Table 83 below.

**Table 83.** Parents' ratings of access-related problems over time - pre-program and post-program.

Scoring	Description of Access Arrangement	Pre-program assessments		Post-program assessments	
		Mother	Father	Mother	Father
0	<i>Access arrangements presented parent with no undue problems.</i>	5	3	7	0
1	<i>Intermittent difficulties experienced, but access not on the whole perceived as a conflict situation.</i>	5	1	2	2
2	<i>Parent experienced some tensions and anxiety in relation to access – e.g. deterioration in child's behavior following visits, difficulty in re-instating discipline.</i>	7	0	5	2
3	<i>Child presenting with behavioral and/or emotional disturbances which parent attributes directly to access arrangements.</i>	4	6	1	6
4	<i>Severe access-related problems, necessitating legal consultation and / or seeking psychological assistance.</i>	2	3	2	3

At the pre-program assessment seventeen mothers (74% of the sample) as opposed to four fathers (31% of the sample) rated that their access-related problem were moderate, i.e. ranged between scores of '0' and '3'. This trend remained much the same at the post-program assessment. Nine fathers (69% of the sample) as compared to six mothers (26% of the sample) reported severe access-related problem with scores of between '4' and '5' at

the pre-program assessment. Once again this trend was consistent at the post-program assessment.

These research results indicated that access-related problems remained relatively unchanged during program intervention, with fathers perceiving themselves to be experiencing far more severe access-related problems than mothers perceived themselves to be experiencing. Thus it seems that not only were children experiencing inadequate contact with their non-custodial parents, but fathers, who were predominantly the non-custodial parent for this subject group, also indicated that they did not have as much access to their children in the post-divorce situation as they would like to. Once again it seemed to be beyond the scope of CODIP to address this issue.

## **Section 4.2. Thematic Analysis Results**

### ***4.2.4. The Ontogenetic level of Children's functioning***

At this systemic level children's post-divorce adjustment, as well as their normal development, was assessed. Moderating variables that have already been quantitatively assessed (section 4.1.2.) in this area of ontogenetic functioning are: children's temperament; their perception of the divorce/separation event; and the degree of post-divorce emotional and behavioral adjustment children have made, as assessed by themselves, parents, teachers and group leaders. In this thematic analysis the following demographic variables as assessed by the General Demographic Information Questionnaire (Appendix 5) are described - children's age, gender and standard at school. The Problem Checklist (Stolberg, Cullen, Garrison & Brophy, 1983) is also used as an assessment tool to give some understanding of the divorce-related problems children who participated in this study were experiencing during program intervention and in the fifteen months thereafter.



**General Demographic Information Questionnaire:  
Age, gender and school standard of children participating in CODIP.**

Initially a summary of the above-mentioned variables is detailed in Tables 84 and 85. Thereafter they are thematically described and evaluated.

***School standards of children who participated in the Children of Divorce Intervention Program (CODIP).***

**Table 84.** Summary of the school standards of children who participated in CODIP:

<i>Sub B</i>	<i>Std. 1</i>	<i>Std. 2</i>	<i>Std. 3</i>	<i>Std. 4</i>	<i>Std. 5</i>
3	7	3	5	6	3

Most children (twenty-one children) were in standards one to four. Children in these standards, on average, ranged between the ages of eight and eleven years.

A summary of the actual age range of the children who participated in this study will now be presented in tabulated form (Table 85) and discussed.

***Age of children who participated in CODIP.***

Some researchers believed younger children were most seriously affected by parental separation/divorce (Allison & Furstenburg, 1989; Kalter & Rembar, 1981); however, other theorists have found that all children, regardless of their age, experience parental divorce as a major life transition (Emery, 1988; Hetherington, Cox & Cox, 1979; Kalter & Rembar, 1981). According to Wallerstein (1985), the age of the child is relevant as an indicator of the normal developmental tasks a child will be facing, and consequently his/her psychosocial orientation to the divorce process.

Summarized in Table 85 below are the specific ages of children who participated in CODIP.

**Table 85.** Children's age at the time of their participation in the Children of Divorce Intervention Program.

<i>7-8yrs</i>	<i>8-9yrs</i>	<i>9-10yrs</i>	<i>10-11yrs</i>	<i>11-12yrs</i>	<i>12-13yrs</i>	<i>13-14yrs</i>
1	8	3	4	5	4	3

Nine of the children who participated in CODIP were in the early latency age group; twelve were in the later latency age group; and seven were pre-adolescent in terms of their age appropriate stages of development. An understanding of age-specific responses to parental separation is important in terms of predicting children's adjustment responses whilst participating in CODIP. Wallerstein (1983b) says these age-appropriate responses are most pertinent in the acute transitional phase in the first two years after parental separation and marital breakdown. Thereafter divorce-related responses become more obtuse and less acute. A description of the age-appropriate responses typical of the three age groups of children who participated in CODIP is described below.

Children in the early latency age group (5yrs 6mths - 8years) initially display the following responses to parental divorce and separation: moderate depression, preoccupation with father's departure from the custodial home, open grief and intense longing for his return. They experience their father's departure as a personal rejection. The children in this age group often experience a disruption in their school learning as well as deteriorated relationships with their peers following the decision of parents to separate (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1976).

Children in the late latency age group (between 9 and 12yrs) showed the following reactions to their parents' separation or divorce: a perception that one parent is responsible for the divorce and the other parent is the victim; intense anger towards parents for voluntarily making a decision that is so adversely impacting on the child him-/herself. Children are acutely aware of the dating and sexual behaviors of parents that are both exciting and distracting. They feel responsible for the parental divorce, fantasize that they can bring parents back together again, and often develop mild psychosomatic

ailments when they cannot cope with divorce-related adjustments (Kalter & Rembar, 1981; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1976).

Adolescents (over 12yrs) also exhibit intense anger with regards to the de-stabilization of their life-situation. They have the developing cognitive skills to be able to understand that both parents have contributed to the divorce event, and they themselves were not to blame. They often experience intense confusion as they are reaching a psychosocial stage of development where they would be normally separating from parents and developing their own identity. In the post-divorce situation adolescents may be faced with possible perceived rejection and abandonment by the parent who is no longer living with them and hence, appropriate psychosocial separation from parents becomes threatening.

To follow is a description of the gender of children who participated in CODIP.

#### *Gender of children who participated in CODIP.*

There were fifteen girls and thirteen boys who participated in CODIP. Several theorists have reported that boys more than girls struggled in terms of their post-divorce adjustment (Hetherington et al., 1979). The following suggestions have been made for these gender-based differences. Firstly that younger boys are exposed to more stress, frustration and aggression with less nurturance and support from mothers, teachers and peers (Hetherington et. al., 1979). Secondly boys have less well-developed interpersonal skills (Clarke-Stewart & Friedman, 1978). Research has shown that boys in mother-custody homes adjust more poorly than boys in father-custody or reconstituted homes (Santrock & Warshack, 1979). In many of the quantitative research results (section 4.1.2.) gender-specific differences in terms of adaptation to parental separation and divorce were not pertinent.

To follow is a summary of results attained through the use of The Problem Checklist.

### **The Problem Checklist**

The Problem Checklist was devised by Stolberg, Cullen, Garrison, and Brophy in 1983 as an assessment tool to understand the specific problem areas being experienced by each child who participated in CODIP. The child is asked to *'mark with an asterisk (\*) the five situations that are the biggest problem for you'* out of a list of twenty-two possible divorce-related problems.

Children at pre-program, post-program and follow-up measurements completed this scale. Sixteen children completed this checklist at the follow-up time measurement, eight children completed the checklist at pre-program and post-program measurements.

Tabulated on the following page (Table 86) are the most frequent problems experienced by children who participated in CODIP at the different time measurements.

Table 86. Summary of Problem Checklist results rated by children who participated in CODIP.

<i>Problems</i>	<i>Pre-program</i> (n = 8)		<i>Post-program</i> (n = 8)		<i>Follow-up</i> (n = 16)	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
1. Mom doesn't have enough time to spend with me.	4	2	2		4	2
2. Dad doesn't have enough time to spend with me.	3	1	2	1	2	3
3. Mom is angry a lot.	1	1	3	1	4	1
4. Dad is angry a lot.	3	2	1	2		3
5. I have a hard time getting my homework done.	2	1	2	1	3	2
6. I am angry a lot.	2	1	1	1	2	
7. I am always thinking about my parents.	4	2	3	1	3	
8. I have to move away from my friends.	1		1	2	1	
9. We don't have enough money for movies and bowling and other fun things like we used to.	2		1	2	2	
10. I don't like the men Mom goes out with.	2	1	1	1	2	1
11. We don't like the women Dad goes out with / is married to.	2		2	3	1	
12. I sometimes think it was my fault that my parents got divorced.	2	2				1
13. I sometimes think Mom doesn't like or want me around.	1	1	3		2	
14. I sometimes think my Dad doesn't like me or want me around.	1	1	2			
15. My Mom is always telling me to say or do things to Dad that I don't want to.	1			1		
16. My Dad is always telling me to say or do things to my Mom that I don't want to.	1				1	
17. My friends think I'm different from them now because my parents are divorced.				1	1	1
18. I have a hard time doing my household chores.	1	1		1	3	2
19. Things in my life seem to keep changing, even though I don't want them to.	2	1	2	1	5	1
20. I don't get along with my friends as well as I used to.	1	1		1		
21. I don't get along with my teachers as well as I used to.	1	1	1			2
22. I have a lot more trouble in school than I used to.	2			1	1	1

Children in both pre-program and follow-up measurements seemed to experience some degree of unavailability of both mothers and fathers. Mothers may be less available because they have to work and bear most of the parenting responsibilities single-handedly. Wallerstein (1987) states that children often equate the unavailability of a working mother with her disinterest and personal rejection. A child in her study, Chuck,

said that his mother was too busy working all the time, "*She does not pay any attention to me. I want her to be a mom with an interest in what I am doing with my life, not just a machine that shells out money*" (p.205). Fathers may be less available due to living in a different place to their children most of the time. Several children, who shared these perceptions, also voiced the opinion that their mother or father did not like them or want them around. They were feeling quite strong emotions of parental rejection and abandonment as a result of the divorce process.

Girls, more than boys, experienced their mothers as being angry a lot of the time; whereas boys, more than girls experienced their fathers as being angry a lot. Possibly in middle childhood when same sex parenting and role modeling are important (Santrock et. al., 1979, 1982), boys and girls depend more on the quality of the parent-child relationship between themselves and the same sex parent.

Girls more than boys seemed to be struggling to get their homework done. Not many children however indicated that they were experiencing school-related problems.

Girls more than boys throughout time measurements were thinking about their parents. Clarke-Stewart & Friedmann (1987) indicated that girls in their psychosocial and moral development were more concerned about the well being of the relationships they engage in. It is sad to note however that this preoccupation with their parents was still an area of concern for many children in this study, five to seven years after the initial divorce event.

Many children, especially girls, and particularly at the follow-up measurement, indicated that '*things in their life kept changing even though they did not want them to*'. Many of the children who voiced this concern had parents who had been divorced for many years already, again an indication of the ongoing time trajectory of the divorce process that can include many ongoing changes children need to adapt to over the majority of their childhood years (Wallerstein, 1989).

Few children felt the divorce was their fault, and few parents seemed to be involving their children in inter-marital conflict. This may be as a result of insights shared at parent

meetings where parents were helped to understand how they could facilitate or hinder their children's post-divorce adjustment. Divorce-related misconceptions that children were responsible for their parents' divorces were also dealt with during program intervention.

Several children rated that they were finding it '*difficult to get household chores completed*'. Few children felt they were experiencing problems at school or in their friendships with peers.

Generally children seemed to be adapting well to school-related changes and peer relationships, but many of them were unhappy with the ongoing changes that occurred within their families. Several children were experiencing feelings of parental abandonment, unavailability and rejection even long after the divorce event.

## Chapter Five

### *Discussion and Conclusion.*

In this study an attempt has been made to observe the post-divorce adjustment of twenty-eight children as they have participated in the Children of Divorce Intervention Program, and as they have progressed during the fifteen-month follow-up period thereafter. Some of the initial research questions posed at the outset of this study were:

1. Which children were most able to benefit from the Children of Divorce Intervention Program?
2. Which program components were the most effective mediators of children's post-divorce adjustment?
3. What possible improvisations could be made to CODIP that could even better facilitate future program outcomes.
4. Which variables extraneous to the program intervention process impacted on the children involved in CODIP?
5. How did children's adjustment, and the adjustment of their parents and their families, change during program intervention, during the follow-up period thereafter, or during the cumulative time period that included both aforementioned time periods.

These questions will be answered as this discussion unfolds.

The life experience of 'CODIP' children during this period of time was considered to be a multilevel process influenced by sets of hierarchically embedded interrelating contextual factors. Some of these factors were unique to particular children other factors affected most 'children of divorce'. These factors, and the processes they influenced, emanated from: the socio-cultural values that supported or hindered the post-divorce adjustment of these children and their families; from exosystemic sources



of stress and support; from the reciprocal family relationships 'CODIP children' were engaged in; and from each child's ontogenetic capacity to cope and adapt to their life circumstances. All these factors were researched within a research design framework inspired by the application of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecosystemic epistemology to the divorce situation by Kurdek's (1981).

A special attempt was made to understand *mediating processes* that facilitated post-divorce adjustment, as opposed to understanding which *moderating variables* predicted that children may be 'at risk' in this life transition. The affect of moderating variables like - children's age, gender and temperament; the length of time parents have been separated or divorced, and the degree of economic disadvantage to divorced parents – has been the focus of much past post-divorce adjustment research. The predominant research designs used in the past have compared 'children of divorce' with children from intact families. Knowledge of these moderating variables and their impact were considered to be important foundational guidelines to understanding the divorce process for subjects in this study. The focus of the study however has been to develop an understanding of the mediating processes that have best encouraged adaptive post-divorce adjustment.

In this study changes were not regarded as static occurrences within a specific time frame, but as interrelated processes that continue to change during the time period of the study, and during the overall ongoing time trajectory of the divorce process. Lewis and Wallerstein (1987) indicate in their research that:

*"For millions of children, divorce is far more than a brief, circumscribed life crisis. Rather it entails a continuing process of change over an extended time period"* (p.128/129).

A research-practitioner approach was taken in this study as an attempt to link basic and applied research. Knowledge gained from past basic research of divorce-related moderating variables was linked to the application of CODIP with the hope of better understanding any mediating processes operational that would facilitate children's adjustment during program intervention and the

follow-up period thereafter. The research results that were obtained through linking basic and applied research within a ecosystemic framework are now discussed. In the Abstract results are summarized within their specific systemic context, but in this chapter they are discussed in a more integrated way as they occurred in reality.

An understanding of the macrosystemic context provided the outermost contextual level in terms of children's post-divorce adjustment. It was understood through the eyes of the parents whose children participated in CODIP. Kurdek's (1981; 1987) research also helped us understand more generally the socio-cultural values of the western society within which most of the children who participated in this study exist. He indicated, and most parents conferred, that individual development and family life in western society today revolve around the ideals of humanism, individualism and self-actualization. It seems that with advances in technology and transport the nuclear family is no longer a part of an extended family, and the family structure that advocates working and living together seldom exists in our present society. Industry and teaching that was focused within the home has now been given over to specialist institutions. The consequence has been an increasingly divided society, that has continued to disintegrate into increasingly divided homes. In the adult pursuit of happiness and psychological well being marital commitments are exchanged for the choice of choosing one life partner after another in an attempt to find the 'right fit' or mutual compatibility. The consequence is the discontinuity of important family bonds and constant changes in relationships and foundational life circumstances that 'children of divorce' need to endure and adapt to.

Socio-cultural values have changed to accommodate divorce, but parents in this study consistently expressed the belief that marriage was a foundational social institution and the nuclear family, with a mother, father and children, was still the highest ideal. These parents conceded that a marital relationship was not acceptable when for one of the partners it exceeded a certain threshold of psychological discomfort and pain. Parents suggested that acceptable alternatives to this situation were divorce and consequent changed family structures like a committed 'living together' arrangement, a reconstituted step-parent family, or a single-parent family. Although parents felt

these were viable alternatives they did not seem to provide the sought after psychological well being and happiness of family members. Often the unhappy circumstances and conflict within an intact nuclear family were exchanged for the loneliness and economic disadvantage of a single parent family; or the complicated step-parenting relationships within a reconstituted family. Many parents felt that adapting to exosystemic changes like a different home or school for the children, economic stresses, an increased work load and at times social ostracization and loneliness, were preferable to living in an unhappy or dysfunctional marital situation. The question one needs to ask, in terms of the future well being of spouses and family members, is whether there any other options to marital unhappiness other than divorce. Some alternative suggestions to divorce as a solution to marital unhappiness are made later on in this chapter when '*implications for future research*' are discussed.

Parents agreed that divorce, although less socially stigmatized in modern society (except within certain cultures and religious groups), was still not regarded as the most functional way of living. Society often accepts the remarried person in preference to the single parent. Divorce was perceived as being less favorable for women in that they were more socially ostracized, more economically disadvantaged, and generally had a heavier workload. Women were most often the custodial parent and had to work outside the home for financial gain, as well as endure most of the child-rearing responsibilities. Divorce was perceived as being less favorable towards men, who were predominantly the non-custodial parent in this study, in that their ongoing access and involvement with their children was not adequate.

Parents indicated that as a consequence of divorce there has been a change in roles and responsibilities within the different post-divorce family units. Parents generally take on more androgynous roles that were previously gender-stereotyped. Both parents become more competent at working outside of the home as well as nurturing and caring for their children within the home. The disadvantage of these changes in roles and responsibilities was that children initially experienced their mothers as being less emotionally available and more demanding, and their fathers as being less

physically available and more permissive. The advantages were that children of necessity took on more age-appropriate roles and responsibilities, which encouraged a sense of industry and competence. Children also had a wider range of role models and extended family supports from possible stepparents and other families their parents become involved with.

Parents took more responsibility in encouraging family values and ways of parenting that were promoted as socially advocated ideals. Parents hoped that the quality of parenting and family interacting would improve over time to compensate for the divided parenting and disruptive family life children were experiencing. In reality parents, especially in the acute phase of the divorce process, did not have enough emotional energy to deal with their own emotional issues and life transitions, as well as changes in their exosystemic context, to accomplish these parenting ideals. Consequently they were left with an initial sense of failure and guilt. Over time some of these ideals were attained. However for most of these families who had been in the divorce process for several years, who had a more stabilized family unit, and who had better financial and economic circumstances, there was still ongoing inter-parental conflict and changes in family relationships that family members needed to contend with.

The exosystemic stresses children indicated were the most difficult for them to deal with were: the ongoing conflict between their estranged parents; inadequate access to, and involvement with, their non-custodial parent; having to attend after care at school because their mothers were working; parental stresses due to financial difficulties; and constant changes in their family structures, as well as their parents dating. During their participation in CODIP children addressed many of these issues. Many times their circumstances could not be changed, but their participation in CODIP mediated changes in their perceptions of these stresses, and mediated the development of coping skills that made adaptive responses to their circumstances possible.

Twenty of the children who participated in CODIP were in standard one to four at school and were between eight and eleven years of age. (One child was seven

years old and the other six children were thirteen or fourteen years old.)

According to their age, nine of these children were in an early latency stage of development, twelve children were in the later latency stage of development, and seven children were in a pre-adolescent developmental stage. The developmental stages of these children affected the way in which they perceived divorce-related issues.

In part answer to question one, *'which children most benefited from CODIP'*, it was the researcher-practitioner's experience that the group experience and outcomes for each group were different, according to the age group in to which group members were assigned. The length of this study did not make it possible to include an in-depth portrayal of the group dynamics that were recorded week by week for each of the four CODIP groups. The 'Junior' group (children aged between seven and nine years), followed by the 'Middle' group (children aged between nine and eleven years), were most able to appropriate the support and resources offered by CODIP. This was less so for the 'Adolescent' group of older children, aged twelve to thirteen years; or the mixed-aged group that operated within a school setting. In the latter group the age range of group members was between seven and thirteen years. Younger children in the 'Junior' and 'Middle' groups were more responsive and involved in CODIP. Pre-adolescent children had become more reserved, and had stronger, more practised psychological defenses that prevented them from accessing and dealing with the emotional issues in their lives. In the 'School' group where there was a large age range, children not only had to deal with divorce-related issues, but they also had to adjust to each other's differing responses to divorce-related issues. The large age range compounded the adjustment tasks of the latter group. [The research-practitioner's experience of this study has made it apparent that the actual age of the child responding to the divorce/separation situation is a more important criterion in terms of predicting children's ability to benefit from program intervention, than their actual level of academic attainment.] It was also apparent that CODIP groups in this study functioned best for younger children (between eight and eleven years of age), and for groups of children who were of a similar age and stage of development.

Another factor that predicted how children experienced CODIP was based on whether they were in the 'acute' phase (eleven children) of their parent's divorce, or whether their parents had been divorced for over two years and they were either in the 'transitional' or 'stabilizing' phases (seventeen children) of the divorce process. It was the research-practitioner's overall impression that the two main goals of CODIP – to provide social support and develop coping skills – were differentially applicable for children who were in the different phases of the divorce process. For children in the 'acute' phase of the divorce process program intervention was an important source of social support, however these children learnt fewer coping skills and made less adaptation to their post-divorce situation. These children were still contending with too many new systemic changes. Children who were in the 'transitional' or 'stabilizing' phases of the divorce process learnt more coping skills and made more divorce-related adjustments.

Of the twenty-eight children who participated in CODIP, twenty-six children were in the custody of their mothers. Seven of these children lived in reconstituted families. Many theorists have found that boys find it more difficult to adjust in the post-divorce process, especially when they are in single-parent mother-centered homes (Santrock & Warshack, 1979); whereas girls find the post-divorce adjustment process more difficult in father-centered single-parent or step-father families (Hetherington, Cox & Cox, 1985). Although fifteen girls and thirteen boys participated in this study, gender did not seem to affect CODIP outcomes.

Another moderating ontogenetic factor affecting children's adjustment during the divorce process was their temperamental orientation. Hetherington (1989) indicated that children's temperamental orientation did not make a difference to their ability to cope in this life transition if there were low levels of stress to contend with and high degrees of support. If the converse was true however, temperamentally difficult children experienced more adversity in the post-divorce situation. Three boys and three girls of the twenty-eight children who participated in CODIP were found to be temperamentally difficult in terms of High Extraversion/High Neuroticism JEPI

scores at the pre-program assessment. Three of the same boys and two of the same girls still fell within this category of JEPI scores at the post-program assessment. Hence there were few children who participated in CODIP who would be described as 'temperamentally difficult' in terms of High Extraversion/High Neuroticism JEPI scores. In addition children who participated in CODIP did not change in their temperamental orientation during program intervention. Low Social Desirability/Lie scores of 75% of the children who completed the Junior Eysenck Personality Inventory were reliable. Hetherington (1989) also indicated that temperamentally difficult children facing high levels of stress with few supports could be bolstered from adversarial divorce-related consequences if they were experiencing a warm, positive parent-child relationship. In the light of this finding it is important to consider the family functioning and the parent-child relationships of children who participated in CODIP. These latter dynamics occurred in the microsystemic context that impacted on the adjustment of children in this study.

At this level, mothers and fathers indicated that there had been an improvement in family functioning (according to FAD ratings) during *program intervention* in the following areas: Problem Solving, Affective Responsiveness, Affective Involvement, and General Family Functioning. Fathers also assessed Role Functioning and Behavioral Control to have improved during this time period. These results indicated that mediating processes operational during program intervention may be facilitating improved family functioning, which in turn may hopefully have been encouraging children's post-divorce adjustment.

The above FAD Problem Solving results, together with GLEF 'problem score' results, indicated that problem solving skills improved in the family unit as well as within individual children who participated in CODIP, during program intervention. In answer to the second research question mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, '*which program components best facilitated children's post-divorce adjustment*', it was apparent that the development of improved problem solving skills may have been a very important process in mediating children's post-divorce adjustment. Bray, Berger, Silverblatt and Hollier (1978) indicated that these skills were foundational not only to good family functioning and children's adjustment, but were also fundamental

to adequate inter-spousal communication and conflict-resolution whether couples were engaged in their first or second marriage.

The family functioning results that indicated family members had become more emotionally involved and responsive towards each other during program intervention may have been mediated by children's participation in CODIP, by parents' concurrent participation in parent meetings, and according to mothers – by the divorce/separation event.

According to mothers' and fathers' FAD assessments role functioning in the family improved during the *cumulative time period* that included program intervention and the fifteen-month follow-up period thereafter. During this same time period mothers alone assessed affective responsiveness to have significantly improved and fathers alone assessed problem solving and overall family functioning to have improved. Changes during this cumulative time period may have been mediated not by processes operational as a result of program intervention but by the natural time trajectory of the divorce process as family members adjusted to their new life circumstances.

Fathers alone indicated a different trend for two areas of family functioning over this cumulative time period. They assessed Affective Involvement and Behavioral Control to improve during program intervention (this trend was statistically significant for Affective Involvement only) and then to significantly decline in the fifteen-month follow-up period thereafter when program intervention and concurrent parent meetings were no longer operative.

When mothers and fathers were asked to distinguish whether the divorce/separation event and/or program intervention had made a difference to family functioning, mothers indicated that problem solving, communication, affective involvement and responsiveness, and overall family functioning had improved during the *divorce/separation event*. Fathers on the other hand indicated that problem solving, affective responsiveness and involvement, and overall family functioning had improved during *program intervention*.



Over the cumulative time period that included both the divorce/separation event and program intervention both mothers and fathers indicated that problem solving, affective responsiveness and involvement, behavioral control, and overall family functioning had improved. Only mothers indicated that role functioning and communication had significantly improved during this time.

When we consider the cumulative time periods a) that included program intervention and the fifteen-month follow-up period thereafter, and b) program intervention and the divorce/separation event, program intervention seemed to have facilitated more significant mediating processes for improved family functioning in father-centered family units than it had done in mother-centered family units. Mothers indicated that the mediating process that best seemed to facilitate improved family functioning in their homes emerged during the divorce/separation event.

A very important relationship dynamic to fathers and children who participated in this study was the quality of the ongoing access between them. Results from the Parent's Access-Related Problem Interview indicated that children and fathers (who were predominantly the non-custodial parents) indicated that they experienced their ongoing relationship to be inadequate. The Fifteen-month Follow-up questionnaire for children and adults indicated that for some children this relationship improved over time, for other children the paucity of this relationship remained an ongoing area of deprivation. Overall the quality of this relationship did not seem to improve during CODIP. Parenting Contact Questionnaire (PCQ) results however indicated that fathers and mothers perceived children's relationships with their non-custodial parent to be above average.

PCQ results also gave an indication of the co-parenting relationship between estranged spouses. Fathers perceived this relationship to be more supportive and involved during program intervention than mothers perceived the same relationship to be. Fathers assessed this relationship to decline during the fifteen-month follow-up period when their involvement with parent meetings, and the support of their children in CODIP, was no longer happening. These results once again indicated how

important fathers felt their inclusion in this study might have been as a mediating process that facilitated a functional ongoing co-parenting relationship.

Another aspect of children's microsystemic context was the quality of their relationship with their parents. Grych and Fincham (1992) indicated that the deleterious effects of divorce are minimized when parents are cooperative, consistent in their parenting, and maintain a good relationship with their children. Children's parents' and group leaders' comments indicated that in the post-divorce situation children needed parents who were not only emotionally and physically available, but parents who were able to understand their children's confused and changing feelings, and parents who were able to provide the security and constancy of appropriate limits. The parenting style that best described this type of parenting in the Parenting Style Questionnaire (PSQ) was called the 'Validating' parenting style (Sanders & Remsburg, 1983). PSQ results indicated that there was not a statistically significant 'parent' or 'time' effect for the 'Validating' parenting style, which children rated at a 71% level of efficacy for both mothers and fathers throughout the three months that CODIP was operational. Children perceived their parents to be functioning highly in terms of the most appropriate parenting style to foster children's post-divorce adjustment.

When children assessed their parents' other parenting styles during program intervention they assessed their mothers to be less critical and demanding than mothers assessed themselves to be; and they assessed their fathers to be less demanding, critical, inadequate, disengaged or overprotective than fathers assessed themselves to be. Overall PSQ results showed no statistically significant 'time' effects thus indicating that 'parenting' may be a more established relationship variable that does not change 'over time', i.e. in this study, parenting style did not change significantly during program intervention. There was a trend however, that was not statistically significant, that indicated 'Child-Mother' comparisons of the same parenting style became more similar during program intervention, indicating an increasingly common perception between children and their mothers. 'Child-Father' comparative assessments however did not follow the same trend, and with regard to

certain parenting styles – fathers’ ‘Critical’ and ‘Disengaged’ parenting styles – children and their fathers’ perceptions became even more discrepant during program intervention.

Children’s ontogenetic functioning was assessed by themselves (The Child Rating Scale; Children’s Beliefs about Parental Divorce Scale), their parents (The Parent Evaluation Form; the Rutter’s Adjustment Scale), by their teachers (The Teacher-Child Rating Scale) and by the group facilitators of CODIP (The Group Leaders Evaluation Form).

Children’s assessment of their classroom behavior indicated a statistically significant improvement in their ‘peer social skills’ ability during the cumulative time period of program intervention and the fifteen-month follow-up period thereafter. There was not a statistically significant difference over time for their shy/anxious behavior (52% level of anxiety), their rule compliant behavior (79% level of compliance with classroom rules) or the number of learning-related academic problems (74% level of learning-related problems) they were experiencing. These results confer with the comment made by Alpert-Gillis et al. (1989) that research needs to be conducted to understand which mediating processes would best generalize post-divorce adjustment outcomes for children who participated in CODIP to the classroom situation. CBAPS results conferred that children’s ability to relate to peers had not only improved over the aforementioned cumulative time period, but also during program intervention. These improved relationship dynamics with peers may have been facilitated by any, or a combination, of the following mediating processes:

- social cohesion and personal empowerment facilitated by supportive peer relationships experienced during participation in the group program;
- the normalization of the divorce process as children who participated in CODIP became aware that they had peers in the same situation;
- the development of appropriate problem solving and anger-control competency skills that were learnt during CODIP participation that facilitated children’s social competence.

Other CBAPS perceptions that decreased during the cumulative time period of the eighteen-month study were children's fear of parental abandonment and their hope that estranged parents would be reunified. Although this trend that was not statistically significant during program intervention, changes in these perceptions may have been initiated during CODIP when these divorce-related fears and misconceptions were addressed, and then consolidated in the period thereafter.

One of the goals of the CODIP intervention was the allaying of the misconception that children were responsible for their parents' divorces. CBAPS ratings indicated that children did not attribute significantly different amounts of blame to their parents or to themselves for parental divorce. The clarification of this misconception may have already been mediated through understanding gained in the initial parent meeting, or through information made available to parents through popular magazine and newspaper articles. Information gained from The Stress/Support Adjustment Questionnaire for Adults indicated that few parents would have accessed this knowledge from relevant professional resources.

PEF and RAS parent assessments of children's adjustment seemed to be conflicting. Mothers', but not fathers', PEF scores indicated that their children's behavioral adaptation had improved in the cumulative time period that included program intervention and the follow-up period thereafter. Fathers' RAS scores however, indicated that their children were better adjusted, less maladjusted (30% maladjusted), in their post-divorce situation than mothers perceived their children to be (59% maladjusted). Behavioral maladjustment did not change significantly over the eighteen months of the current study. The PEF and RAS have not been verified as having concurrent validity and on face value appear to measure quite different aspects of children's behavioral adjustment/maladjustment.

CBAPS and RAS findings may indicate that mediating processes occurring during children's participation in CODIP may lead to improvements in their emotional adjustment and their cognitive perceptions of divorce-related problems/events, but may not lead to changes in children's behavior. Some explanations for this lack of

reported behavioral adaptation during program intervention might be that behavioral adjustment is a secondary process that is:

- Initially mediated by more primary changes in children's perceptions and emotional well-being, possibly during program intervention, which then culminate in secondary behavioral changes in the follow-up period thereafter;
- Developed over a longer period of time than was possible during the three months of program intervention;
- Mediated once 'coping skills' had been learnt during program intervention and then consolidated in terms of behavioral adjustment in the time period thereafter.

Research design improvisations that include a divorce-control group may be necessary to clarify these hypotheses.

Teachers' T-CRS scores indicated a trend that 'problem' (acting out behavior, shy/anxious behavior, and learning problems) and 'competency' (frustration tolerance, assertiveness, peer social skills, and task orientation) scores improved during program intervention. This trend was not statistically significant.

Group leaders' GLEF evaluations however indicated that there were statistically significant improvements in 'emotional and behavioral divorce-related problems' children were experiencing, and in the 'competency skills' they were learning. These improvements occurred during program intervention when problem-solving skills (sessions/weeks three to seven) and appropriate anger-control skills (sessions/week seven to twelve) were being learnt. During the latter period of time children were also learning to appreciate that the family values they so desired could happen in different family structures, even post-divorce family structures. It seemed that mediating processes that were operational through CODIP participation facilitated coping skills and perceptions that offered hope for future happiness as well as improved post-divorce adjustment.

### *Implications for future research.*

This study has attempted to overcome methodological weaknesses of other research designs that have assessed divorce-related moderating variables as though they were consistent over time, and as though they emulated from a single source as opposed to interdependent systemic contexts. This study has not assumed teacher, parent and child perceptions of the same variable or process to be synonymous. In addition the research design of this study has incorporated a follow-up component to pre-program and post program assessments.

The follow-up component of the research design was important in answering the following research questions:

1. *Were statistically significant changes that occurred during program intervention sustained in the fifteen-month follow-up period thereafter?* This component of the study was valuable when it was possible to observe that children participating in CODIP became more adept in their peer relationship skills during program intervention, and that this ability was sustained during the follow-up period thereafter.
2. *Were there statistically significant changes that occurred during program intervention that were not sustained in the fifteen months thereafter?* The answer to this question may indicate that specific changes were fostered during program intervention but were not sustainable when this interventive support was no longer available. This aspect of the study made it possible to observe i) that fathers perceived behavioral control and affective involvement in their families to have improved significantly during program intervention, but then to decline in the follow-up period thereafter; and ii) to observe that fathers perceived the co-parenting contact and the support they experienced with their former spouses to have improved during program intervention, and then to have significantly declined in the follow-up period thereafter.
3. *Were there statistically significant changes that occurred during the cumulative eighteen-month time period that included program intervention and the follow-up period thereafter?* The follow-up component of the study could indicate that one

of two processes could be operational during this time period. a) Changes initiated during program intervention were consolidated in the time period thereafter; or b) changes occurred gradually over the time trajectory of the divorce process. An example of the former was when changes in children's fear of parental abandonment and their hope for parental reunification begun to decrease during program intervention, but were only found to be statistically significant over the cumulative time period that included both program intervention and the fifteen-month follow-up period thereafter. An example of the latter was when there was a statistically significant gradual change in role functioning within the family over the aforementioned time period.

One way to determine whether process a) or b) was possibly responsible for the statistically significant changes that occurred over the eighteen-month time period of the study, would be to include a demographically matched divorce control group (that did not participate in CODIP) as an improvisation to the current research design. If both the CODIP group and the divorce control group improved over the eighteen month time period of the study then changes were more likely to be due to the normal divorce processes facilitating adjustments over time (process b), and not due to adjustments that were initiated during program intervention and consolidated in the follow-up time period thereafter (process a). If a divorce control group and a more experimental research design was introduced, care would need to be taken that subjects were matched on a wide variety of variables, and that history and extraneous variables would impact on both the experimental and divorce control groups equally. As has already been indicated in section 3.4.2. '*Rationale for measuring instruments used*', the divorce process is a complicated long term process affected by many moderating variables and mediating interdependent ecosystemic processes so this would be a difficult research design criterion to attain.

Another way in which researchers could understand whether the changes that occurred over the aforementioned cumulative time period was possibly due to process a) or b) would be to compare the current research results to those of Pedro-Carroll and her colleagues (1985, 1986, 1989 & 1992). For example, 1989 CRS results of the

latter researchers indicated an improvement in children's classroom behavior for both the experimental and divorce control groups during program intervention. The latter group had not participated in CODIP. These results inferred that because there was an improvement for both groups that the children's behavior possibly improved due to the natural divorce adjustment process, and not because they participated in CODIP. These results may confirm that the improved CRS results of the current study were due to the same process, and not due to process a).

PEF ratings of research conducted by Pedro-Carroll et al. (1985, 1986, 1989 & 1992) indicated an improvement for the experimental group only during program intervention. Thus current improved PEF results over the cumulative time period that included program intervention and the follow-up period thereafter may indicate, in conjunction with results of Pedro-Carroll and her colleagues, that changes initiated in children's behavior during program intervention, were consolidated in the follow-up period thereafter.

A future improvisation that could better facilitate not only children's post-divorce adjustment, but that of their parents and other family members as well, may be to initiate a multi-level intervention. Lewis and Wallerstein (1987) validate this suggestion by the following statement:

*"How children fare during this period of heightened risk depends largely on the extent to which adults in their lives can provide a supportive structure and meaningful adaptative skills to help them cope along the way. Because these processes pose complex challenges for families, a multisystem support structure is needed that includes schools, families, community resources and proactive social policies. Certainly, no single program or policy can adequately address the multiple social plights to which many children are so susceptible. However the results of this study suggests that preventative interventions for children of divorce can be a promising part of that much-needed support network"*  
(pp.128/129).

A suggested model for this multi-level approach that evolved from the research-practitioner's experience during the course of this study is described:



Phase 1a: Children participate in CODIP.

Phase 1b: During this same time period concurrent parent meetings could be held to facilitate parents' understanding of the general divorce process, and the specific program intervention processes their children are experiencing. It is important that the parent-focused intervention at this time is supportive, but not too intense, so that parents' emotional energy and focus is primarily on their children's adjustment, and not also on their own adjustment.

Phase 2: Takes place after CODIP has been completed. Parents now have the opportunity to focus on their own post-divorce adjustment, as opposed to primarily supporting the post-divorce adjustment of their children.

Phase 2a: It is suggested that parents who are in the 'acute' phase of the divorce process take part in a 'Post-Divorce Adjustment group' so that they have an opportunity to deal with their own emotional issues and divorce adjustment processes.

Phase 2b: Parents who have already been divorced for several years may take the opportunity to take part in a 'Parenting Skills group' where they can learn important skills to understand and facilitate the expression of feelings within the family, as well as important problem solving strategies and helpful way of resolving conflict.

Parents would ultimately benefit from taking part in both parent-related groups of Phase 2a and 2b.

At an exosystemic level the Children of Divorce Intervention Program could be made widely available to many schools through school clinics where educational psychologists could be trained to implement this program, together with guidance teachers, in the schools that they oversee. It is important that as many children as possible are availed of the opportunity of this kind of preventative support before divorce-related emotional and behavioral adjustment problems occur.

At a macrosystemic level more didactic knowledge about post-divorce adjustment could be promoted through the media. Recently a small informative booklet was published by a national supermarket chainstore informing their employees and their

customers of ways in which they can better cope in the post-divorce process, and which relevant professional and legal resources were available for people to access.

It is apparent from research findings detailed in section 1.2. of this study that divorce can have quite severe, long term, deleterious effects on children, adults and families. In addition divorce is not reported by parents in this study to be the happy alternative to marriage that brings relief from marital discomfort, psychological well being and long term happiness. In an attempt to find alternatives to divorce, it is suggested that the media and professional resources could advocate more realistic information about the marriage process than is portrayed in popular television series! In his book entitled 'Getting the Love You Want', Hendrix (1993) states:

*"In today's society, you are encouraged to view marriage as a box. First you choose a mate. Then you climb into a box. Once you have a chance to settle in, you take your first close look at your boxmate. In other words, marriage is viewed as an unchanging state, and whether or not it works depends on your ability to attract a good partner. The common solution to an unhappy marriage, the one chosen by nearly fifty percent of all couples, is to divorce and start all over again with a new, and hopefully, better mate. The problem with this solution is that there is a lot of pain involved in switching boxes" (p.xv).*

In summary, Hendrix (1993) advocates that people unconsciously chose their marriage partner based on a familiar image ('imago') they have stored up in their 'old' brain of the most predominant positive and negative characteristics, and experiences of their primary attachments, with their parents/caregivers. For this reason, he says, people choose a partner that is intrinsically familiar, and who is capable of hurting them in ways that they have been deeply hurt in their childhood. This inevitable interaction between married couples leads to much psychological pain and unhappiness. At the point at which this emotional pain seems to be overwhelming, couples can choose to abandon the marriage, get divorced, and in the future choose a 'more suitable' life partner. Unfortunately these couples often choose a second life partner who re-enacts similar dynamics to the first life partner and they once again end-up in the same situation of psychological discomfort. Alternatively couples can use the pain they are experiencing, to understand why the ways in which

they are relating are not only unhelpful, but are reminiscent of painful primary relationships they have experienced in the past. Empathetic, willing and committed couples can use this understanding to change ways in which they are relating and create more wholesome relationship dynamics that could restore their marriage.

This attitude to marriage may be one of many alternatives worth considering when parents indicate so often that divorce is not a happy alternative, and when foundational family bonds are changed and disrupted through the divorce process in a way that often leaves an aftermath of sadness, social and personal maladjustment, and divided family life.

The final suggestion for future CODIP implementation is that the program be applied to other groups of children of a similar age who are going through different life transitions, for example children who have experienced the death of a parent, children who have drug-dependent or alcohol-dependent parents, or children who are needing to learn normal developmental skills of appropriate anger control and problem solving.

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## Appendix 1

### The Parenting Contact Questionnaire (PCQ)

Please **tick** the answer that describes your situation best. There is no right or wrong answer.

How much direct contact does your child have with his/her father?

- Frequent, informal contact during the week.
- Weekends – alternate weekends.
- Monthly
- Quarterly (eg. School holidays).

How often does your child have indirect contact (eg. Telephone/letter) with his/her father?

- Weekly
- Alternate weeks
- Monthly
- Quarterly
- Never

Describe the type of direct contact that the child has with his/her father.

- Child spends weekends/stays overnight with father.
- Child spends holidays with father.
- Child visits father in his home.
- Father visits child in child's home.
- Child has no contact with father.

How often do you and your ex-spouse participate in the following behaviors?

We discuss the child's medical problems.

*Always* \_\_\_\_ *Often* \_\_\_\_ *Sometimes* \_\_\_\_ *Rarely* \_\_\_\_ *Never* \_\_\_\_.

We discuss the child's accomplishments/progress.

*Always* \_\_\_\_ *Often* \_\_\_\_ *Sometimes* \_\_\_\_ *Rarely* \_\_\_\_ *Never* \_\_\_\_.

We discuss child-rearing / the child's behavioral problems.

*Always* \_\_\_\_ *Often* \_\_\_\_ *Sometimes* \_\_\_\_ *Rarely* \_\_\_\_ *Never* \_\_\_\_.

We plan special events for the child.

*Always* \_\_\_\_ *Often* \_\_\_\_ *Sometimes* \_\_\_\_ *Rarely* \_\_\_\_ *Never* \_\_\_\_.

We discuss any personal problems the child may be experiencing.

*Always* \_\_\_\_ *Often* \_\_\_\_ *Sometimes* \_\_\_\_ *Rarely* \_\_\_\_ *Never* \_\_\_\_.

We discuss major decisions regarding the child's life.

*Always* \_\_\_\_ *Often* \_\_\_\_ *Sometimes* \_\_\_\_ *Rarely* \_\_\_\_ *Never* \_\_\_\_.

We discuss finances regarding the child.

*Always* \_\_\_\_ *Often* \_\_\_\_ *Sometimes* \_\_\_\_ *Rarely* \_\_\_\_ *Never* \_\_\_\_.

We discuss daily decisions regarding the child.

*Always* \_\_\_\_ *Often* \_\_\_\_ *Sometimes* \_\_\_\_ *Rarely* \_\_\_\_ *Never* \_\_\_\_.

Describe your coparental relationship with your ex-spouse by rating the following statements:

When you and your ex-spouse discuss parenting issues, how often does an argument result?

*Always* \_\_\_\_ *Often* \_\_\_\_ *Sometimes* \_\_\_\_ *Rarely* \_\_\_\_ *Never* \_\_\_\_.

How often is the underlying atmosphere one of conflict and anger?

*Always* \_\_\_\_ *Often* \_\_\_\_ *Sometimes* \_\_\_\_ *Rarely* \_\_\_\_ *Never* \_\_\_\_.

How often is the conversation stressful and tense?

*Always* \_\_\_\_ *Often* \_\_\_\_ *Sometimes* \_\_\_\_ *Rarely* \_\_\_\_ *Never* \_\_\_\_.

Do you and your ex-spouse have basic differences of opinion about issues relating to child-rearing?

*Always* \_\_\_\_ *Often* \_\_\_\_ *Sometimes* \_\_\_\_ *Rarely* \_\_\_\_ *Never* \_\_\_\_.

When you need help regarding the children, do you seek it from your ex-spouse?

*Always* \_\_\_\_ *Often* \_\_\_\_ *Sometimes* \_\_\_\_ *Rarely* \_\_\_\_ *Never* \_\_\_\_.

Would you say that your ex-spouse is a resource to you in raising the children?

*Always* \_\_\_\_ *Often* \_\_\_\_ *Sometimes* \_\_\_\_ *Rarely* \_\_\_\_ *Never* \_\_\_\_.

Would you say that you support your ex-spouse in the raising of the children?

*Always* \_\_\_\_ *Often* \_\_\_\_ *Sometimes* \_\_\_\_ *Rarely* \_\_\_\_ *Never* \_\_\_\_.

If your ex-spouse has needed to make a change in any visiting arrangements, do you accommodate him?

*Always* \_\_\_\_ *Often* \_\_\_\_ *Sometimes* \_\_\_\_ *Rarely* \_\_\_\_ *Never* \_\_\_\_.

If you need to make any change in the visiting arrangements, has your ex-spouse been accomodating?

*Always* \_\_\_\_ *Often* \_\_\_\_ *Sometimes* \_\_\_\_ *Rarely* \_\_\_\_ *Never* \_\_\_\_.

Do you feel that your ex-spouse understands and is supportive of your special needs as a custodial parent?

*Always* \_\_\_\_ *Often* \_\_\_\_ *Sometimes* \_\_\_\_ *Rarely* \_\_\_\_ *Never* \_\_\_\_.

## Appendix 2

### What Kind of a Parent Are You?

Tick off the statement in the following list that you feel are most descriptive of the things you say. We say most of these things sometimes, tick off the statements you say often with an 'O'; the things you say sometimes with an 'S'; and the things you never say with an 'N'.

1. Not right now.
2. I really liked the way you did that.
3. I don't know why. As your Dad (Mom).
4. What were you thinking of when you did that?
5. Do it now!
6. I'm too upset to talk to you.
7. You had better let me help you.
8. You dummy!
9. It's none of your business.
10. I hate you.
11. That shows you put a lot of work into it.
12. Clean up your room now.
13. I'll make you pay for this.
14. I'm too busy. Maybe later.
15. I can't believe you did that!
16. It's just for us to worry about.
17. I know it must be disappointing ....
18. Because I said so.
19. I can't promise you.
20. I can't take this.
21. I'm too tired.
22. That's my rule. That's why.
23. What do you think I should do?
24. You look terrible. Go change.
25. Do you think you are ready for that?
26. I am so proud of you.
27. I can't talk to him. You can do it.
28. Can't you see I'm busy.
29. I can't tell your Mom (your Dad) it will upset her (him).
30. You better not move ahead without asking me first.
31. No, because I said so. You don't need a reason.
32. You never do anything right. Let me do it.
33. Get over here and do what I tell you.
34. You did that so well. Show me how to do it.
35. Maybe tomorrow.

36. Stop it!
37. I can't believe you did that again when I told you not to.
38. Just what do you think you are doing?
39. I'll do that for you.
40. I am afraid you are going to get hurt.
41. You really are a great help.
42. I might get to it tomorrow.
43. I don't feel well. Do you mind leaving me alone right now.
44. I said to do it, so do it!
45. You really didn't want to do that, did you?
46. Did I ever tell you how much I love you?
47. I was never allowed to do that when I was your age.
48. I really respect your opinion.



### Appendix 3

#### What kind of a Parenting Style do you think your Mom or Dad has?

Tick off the statement in the following list that you feel are most descriptive of the things you say. We say most of these things sometimes, tick off the statements you say often with an 'O'; the things you say sometimes with as 'S'; and the things you never say with an 'N'.

49. Not right now.
50. I really liked the way you did that.
51. I don't know why. As your Dad (Mom).
52. What were you thinking of when you did that?
53. Do it now!
54. I'm too upset to talk to you.
55. You had better let me help you.
56. You dummy!
57. It's none of your business.
58. I hate you.
59. That shows you put a lot of work into it.
60. Clean up your room now.
61. I'll make you pay for this.
62. I'm too busy. Maybe later.
63. I can't believe you did that!
64. It's just for us to worry about.
65. I know it must be disappointing ....
66. Because I said so.
67. I can't promise you.
68. I can't take this.
69. I'm too tired.
70. That's my rule. That's why.
71. What do you think I should do?
72. You look terrible. Go change.
73. Do you think you are ready for that?
74. I am so proud of you.
75. I can't talk to him. You can do it.
76. Can't you see I'm busy.
77. I can't tell your Mom (your Dad) it will upset her (him).
78. You better not move ahead without asking me first.
79. No, because I said so. You don't need a reason.
80. You never do anything right. Let me do it.
81. Get over here and do what I tell you.
82. You did that so well. Show me how to do it.
83. Maybe tomorrow.
84. Stop it!

- 85. I can't believe you did that again when I told you not to.
- 86. Just what do you think you are doing?
- 87. I'll do that for you.
- 88. I am afraid you are going to get hurt.
- 89. You really are a great help.
- 90. I might get to it tomorrow.
- 91. I don't feel well. Do you mind leaving me alone right now.
- 92. I said to do it, so do it!
- 93. You really didn't want to do that, did you?
- 94. Did I ever tell you how much I love you?
- 95. I was never allowed to do that when I was your age.
- 96. I really respect your opinion.

## Appendix 4

### The Socio-Cultural Attitudes towards Divorce Interview Format.

1. What do you believe is the ideal family structure in our society?
  - 1.1. Do you feel your family fits this structure? In what way does it differ?
  - 1.2. What do you feel are the most important values or priorities a family should have?
  
2. Do you feel marriage is an important institution in your culture and society?
  - 2.1. Do you share the same beliefs and values about marriage as you believe your society and culture does?
  - 2.2. Do you feel there are other alternatives to marriage that would facilitate good family functioning?
  
3. Do you feel different members of the family should have different roles, functions or responsibilities.
  - 3.1. Do you feel these roles, responsibilities and functions should change over time?
  - 3.2. Are these roles typical of those believed to be important by your society or culture?
  
4. What is the status of women in your culture and society?
  - 4.1. How do you feel about this belief?
  - 4.2. Do the women in your family have this status?
  - 4.3. What are some of the role models your child has? What values and beliefs does your child learn from these role models? Are they the same-sex or different-sex role models?
  
5. What are some of the important ways in which children are reared in your culture or society?
  - 5.1. Do these methods of child-rearing work for you?
  
6. Do people in your society or culture think children should have certain rights?
  - 6.1. What rights does your culture or society feel children should have?
  - 6.2. Do you agree/disagree that children should/shouldn't have these rights? Are there any additional rights you feel children should have?
  
7. How do people in your society perceive divorce and the divorcee?
  - 7.1. How do they understand and respect, or disregard, different family structures – for example a single parent family or a reconstituted family structure?
  - 7.2. What do you feel about these issues?

## **Appendix 5**

### General Demographic Information.

Mandy Young, a Social Worker in Private Practise and a Social Science Masters student at UCT would like to research the Children of Divorce Intervention program (CODIP) for children between the age of 9 and 12 years. This program was developed in 1985 by Joanne Pedro-Carroll, a Clinical Psychologist with a doctoral degree. CODIP has been extensively field tested in 50 schools in the Rochester area of New York, the United States of America and other countries, including New Zealand and Australia. Mandy Young would like to work together with other professionals to conduct this program for the first time in South Africa. It is a preventative group-based program that aims at averting possible long-lasting affects parental separation/divorce may have on children. Should you wish your child to be a participant in the Children of Divorce Intervention program the following criteria need to be met:

1. You and your child need to be willing participants.
2. Your child must be experiencing his/her parents' separation/divorce.
3. Your child must be between the ages of 9 and 12 years.
4. You and your child need to be willing to participate in an interview and to complete several questionnaires.

When the research is written-up you can be assured of confidentiality, any details mentioned will be with the use of a pseudonym. Hopefully you and your child will benefit from the Children of Divorce Intervention Program. In addition the contribution of your knowledge of the processes and effects of CODIP will be greatly valued as it will facilitate an increasingly more sensitive application if the program in the future.

1. Name and Proposed Pseudonym.
2. Are you the custodial or the non-custodial parent?
3. Address.

4. Occupation.
5. Income per month.

R0 - R1399	R1400 – R2199	R2200 or more

6. Date of marriage.
7. Date of separation.
8. Date of divorce.
9. Date of remarriage.
10. Number, sex and date of birth of your children.
11. What access arrangements were made at the time of your divorce?
12. How were these arrangements made – in agreement, through a family Advocate; as the result of a custody dispute, in any other way?
13. How was your Divorce settlement decided – through lawyers; a mediation process; by private arrangement; in any other way?

Thank you for your participation thus far. Please return this form to Mandy Young, Psychology Department, University of Cape Town, Private Bag, Rondebosch, 7700.

## Appendix 6

### The Stress/Support Adjustment Scale for Adults.

Describe all the changes or adjustments in your outer-life/environment that have taken place as a consequence of your divorce/separation in the following possible areas of your life. Rate the degree to which these changes have been positive or negative.

- 2 = very Positive impact
- 1 = Positive impact
- 0 = No Impact
- 1 = Moderately Stressful
- 2 = Extremely Stressful

1. Changes in work roles (eg. from a housewife to a secretary).
2. Changes in financial resources (eg. no holiday, fewer social outings etc.)
3. Changes in nutrition (eg. different daily menus).
4. A changed social life (eg. less free time, difficulty attaining babysitters, loss of certain friendships previously shared with former spouse).
5. Change in residence.
6. Any other changes.

### Support systems available for Parent/Child

What sources or kinds of support have there been for you since you separated/divorced?  
Rate how helpful these support systems have been to you in the following way:

- |  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| If they have been ' <i>Very Unhelpful</i> '      | your score = -2 |
| If they have been ' <i>Minimally Unhelpful</i> ' | your score = -1 |
| If they have made ' <i>No Difference</i> '       | your score = 0  |
| If they have been ' <i>Helpful</i> '             | your score = 1  |
| If they have been ' <i>Very Helpful</i> '        | your score = 2  |

Please rate the support systems below, and any others that have been helpful or unhelpful to you.

1. Extended family
2. Friends
3. Work colleague
4. Church
5. Specialist support for example Divorce Adjustment Group or Individual Therapy.
6. Others.

## Appendix 7

### The Stress/Support Adjustment Questionnaire for Children.

Describe all the different changes in your life since your Mom and Dad separated/divorced. Say how positive or negative these changes were by putting a number for whatever words best describes this change for you, for example if you found moving to a new house with a swimming pool was a 'very positive' change you would give that question a score of 2. If you found having to make new friends, because you moved to a new house, a difficult thing to do at first, you can give a score of -1, 'moderately stressful'. Here is how you give a score for your answer.

If your answer is a 'very positive change'	your score = 2
If your answer is a 'positive change'	your score = 1
If your answer is 'made no difference'	your score = 0
If your answer is 'moderately difficult'	your score = -1
If your answer is 'extremely difficult'	your score = -2.

These are the questions:

1. Do you have different or new tasks to do at home (eg. putting out the garbage can, a task Dad used to do)?
2. Do you have any changes in your daily routine (eg. Mom is not at home in the afternoons anymore because she is working and you have to go to the after care at school)?
3. Do you have different food (eg. porridge instead of cereal)?
4. Do you seem to have more or less money to spend than you used to (eg. no more going to 'Lazer Quest'; you get second hand clothes etc.)?
5. Do you go to the same or a different school?
6. Do you still live in the same place?
7. Do you still have the same friends, or have you had to make new friends?
8. Any other changes?

### Support systems available for Parent/Child

What sources or kinds of support have there been for you since you separated/divorced? Rate how helpful these support systems have been to you in the following way:

If they have been 'Very Unhelpful'	your score = -2
If they have been 'Minimally Unhelpful'	your score = -1
If they have made 'No Difference'	your score = 0
If they have been 'Helpful'	your score = 1
If they have been 'Very Helpful'	your score = 2

Please rate the support systems below, and any others that have been helpful or unhelpful to you.

1. Extended family
2. Friends
3. Work colleague
4. Church
5. Specialist support for example the Children of Divorce intervention Program or Individual Therapy.
6. Others.

**Appendix 8****15-month Follow-up Questionnaire for Adults.**

Please list any changes / happenings you feel have been significant in your own post-Divorce / Separation adjustment, or that of your family or children, over the past year, in the following areas:

**Environmental Changes:**

(eg. Change in residence, school etc.)

**Relationship Changes:**

(eg. new boyfriend / girlfriend, initiated co-habitation; remarriage etc.)

**Employment Changes:****Changes in Custody / Access:**

(Eg. are now the Custodial parent when you were the Non-Custodial parent, or vice versa; now have Joint Custody etc.)

**Changes in Financial Circumstances:****Change in Support:**

(Eg. have had psychotherapeutic help, joined a Support group, new friends, new social activity etc.)

**Other changes/happenings you feel have been significant in the last fifteen months:**



## Appendix 9

### 15-month Follow-up Questionnaire for Children.

Please list anything that has happened in the last year that has made a big difference in your life - maybe it has made you feel more happy, or more sad; more angry or more confused etc. Maybe there are some changes under the following headings you can think of:

**You see your parent's Divorce / Separation differently now:**

(Eg. before you thought it was all your father's fault, now you realize both parent's were responsible. Or you thought your parents would come together again, now you realize they never will etc.)

**Change in relationships:**

(Eg. either there has been a change in the relationships your parent's are involved in - they have a new boyfriend / girlfriend, or they are living with somebody else now; or maybe you have made new friends etc.)

**Change in school or where you live?**

**Changes in how you are living:**

(Eg. before you had very little money, now your mother has a better job and things are not so difficult financially; or Dad has a new job and has more pocket-money to give you etc.)

**Changes in who you are living with:**

**Changes in how you feel about yourself:**

**Any other significant changes:**

**Appendix 10****Parent's Access-Related Problem Scale.**

Choose the description which best applies to your circumstances.

- 0 Access arrangements presented parent with no undue problems.
- 1 Intermittent difficulties experienced, but access not on the whole perceived as a conflict situation.
- 2 Parent experienced some tension and anxiety in relating to access – eg. deterioration in child's behavior following visits, difficulty in re-instating discipline.
- 3 Child presenting with behavioral and/or emotional disturbances with parent attributes directly to access arrangements.
- 4 Severe access-related problems, necessitating legal consultations and/or seeking psychological assistance.